

*The RIDDLE
of LIFE*



*"You eat that root of bitterness called Man
Raw: I prefer it cooked, with social sauce."*

—BROWNING



The Riddle of Life

A NOVEL

By J. WESLEY JOHNSTON

*Author of "Dwellers in Gotham,"
"Philip Yoakley," etc.*



*TORONTO:
WILLIAM BRIGGS*

1902

PZ.

J644r

COPYRIGHT
1902 BY
JENNINGS
& **PYE**



ALL RIGHTS
RESERVED

15-899
19/07/1903

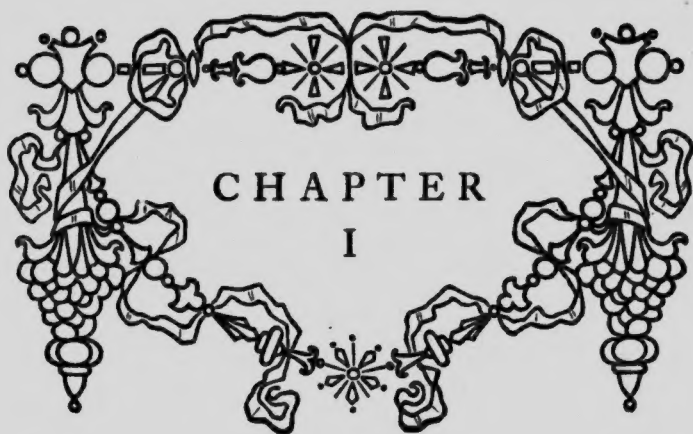
To
Richard B. Kelly, Esq.
New York, N. Y.

*in grateful recognition of sincere
and generous friendship.*



*The RIDDLE
of LIFE*





LEANING over the rail of the upper deck of the Albany steamer, Stephen Derwent watched the passengers as they came on, closely scanning each group with mingled interest and amusement. It was rather late in the season for the usual rush to Saratoga, still a goodly share of those who came on board were bound for the famous springs. Others were going farther up the State; some to Lake George, some to Lake Champlain, while not a few had certain outward and visible signs which suggested the Adirondacks.

It now lacked only a few minutes of sailing time, and a shade of disappointment gathered on Derwent's face; for he had arranged to go up the river with Fred Westerhall, a young man of about his own age, with whom he was on intimate terms.

As a usual thing, Westerhall kept his engagements, though sometimes not appearing till the last moment. But he always had a good excuse, and, being blessed with a nimble tongue and a lively fancy, he generally contrived to give valid

reasons for his failure to appear at the appointed time.

If some of the young ladies on the promenade deck gave Stephen Derwent a glance more kindly than critical, no one could really blame them. He was tall, close upon six feet; his features were not only regular, but gave evidence of strength; there was a positive set about his shoulders which meant more than mere physical vitality; and that clean-shaven face of his indicated both energy and will. At a casual glance he looked full thirty years of age; but when one came closer to him, his youthfulness became more apparent, and it would be seen then that he was not more than twenty-four or five at the most.

"Rather a good-looking fellow," one young lady remarked to another, referring to Derwent, whose position at the rail on the upper deck brought him within easy range of their observing eyes.

"Yes, he is both good-looking and handsome," the other replied, after a critical survey of the young man, a proceeding of which she was eminently capable.

"That is a distinction not always made," the first speaker responded, then looking at Derwent more closely than before.

"Say rather a distinction seldom made," was the rejoinder, accompanied with a smile and look, both of which were suggestive.

"Your friend at the rail, I notice, has managed to bestow his handsome form in very becoming

raiment. That tweed suit was not selected in the dark, neither did that soft felt hat get on his head by chance."

There was something inapt as well as flippant in this reply, but it awakened no protest. The listener knew the irritation and disappointment that were back of it; hence, being a wise woman, she said nothing.

"That young man's face is familiar to me," the first speaker observed after a pause, "and yet I am unable to recall where I have met him."

"Your father's name is Wimbourne, I believe," the other answered with an amused smile. "He is a director in the Gotham Bank, if I am not mistaken. You have sometimes gone with him to that favored institution. While there you—"

"I remember now," the younger lady interrupted. "He is a clerk, or a cashier, or something. Papa sometimes has stopped at his window and got money. But I don't know his name, and never met him anywhere else."

"That is a pity," dryly observed the other. "Otherwise he might have relieved the tedium of this trip up the river, and given you the joys of male companionship from now till sundown."

As Mrs. Bromley said this she smiled pleasantly, and a gleam of genuine mischief flashed from her honest gray eyes.

Just a moment or two before the steamer's sailing-time, a carriage rolled up to the gangway, from which Westerhall stepped out with even more alacrity than usual. There, much to Derwent's

surprise, he assisted a young lady from the carriage, only, however, as a preliminary to the more serious task of aiding a man of perhaps sixty years of age, who looked as if he had barely recovered from a severe illness. Resting one arm heavily upon that of the young lady, and the other within the arm of Westerhall, the invalid slowly walked to the main deck, where he sat down wearily in a chair near the gangway. Westerhall then returned to the pier, seeing to the baggage, which was promptly disposed of, and, after gathering up such articles as had been left in the carriage, he came back to the steamer. The gangway was now drawn ashore, the ship's deep whistle blew, followed immediately by the heavy beat of the paddles, and, swinging out from her dock, the steamer was soon heading up the Hudson River.

Derwent was much perplexed at the turn affairs had taken. Westerhall had said nothing to him about these people with whom he was evidently on such intimate terms. Only that morning he had received a message from him saying he would meet him at the boat as they had arranged. He hardly knew, therefore, just what was expected of him under these new conditions. He resolved, however, to go down to the main deck, but had hardly reached the foot of the saloon stairs before Westerhall saw him, and at once brought him over to the place where his friends were yet seated. Soon after the formal introductions, Derwent learned that Mr. and Miss Wariston were relations of Westerhall, and on

their way to the upper part of the State. Mr. Warriston had now partially recovered from the fatigue of his ride to the steamer, so, with the help of Derwent and Westerhall, he was able to reach the saloon deck. Miss Warriston sat beside her father, and the eager, anxious care with which she regarded him was manifest in every look and movement. But this did not prevent her from enjoying the glorious view on either side of the river, and her dark, wistful eyes would rest first on one shore, and then on the other.

The abrupt, sharp line of New Jersey, developing finally into the Palisades, gives to the Hudson at certain points a grandeur exceeding that of the Rhine. Here and there during the season the foliage is perhaps excessive; for it obscures the mighty boulders and cliffs, and interferes with effects which otherwise would be ruggedly massive. Then, at other places, the banks are seen sheer and bare, as though cleft with a giant's ax, and tower hundreds of feet above the water's edge. But as the steamer swiftly beats its way, the New York shore takes on boldness, and even sublimity, and there are masses of rock thrown as from Titanic hands, which, projecting far into the river, threaten to stay the vessel in its course. After a time the hills gently slope away, disclosing homes sufficiently imposing to suggest baronial halls and feudal castles; then others less pretentious, though elegant and impressive; then, again, towns and villages coming down to the river's edge, eager to catch its cooling breath.

Eleanor Warriston saw the sun struggle with the clouds which all day had enfolded it, scattering them with a mighty effort, as a dying chieftain repels the enemies who have gathered around him on the sward. Then she saw the waters take on the changing glories of the sky, until the steamer's track shone in mysterious light. With a look of wonder she watched the hills cover themselves in robes of purple and gold, as though the coming night meant a coronation. After this the sun went down, not sullen and discontented as so many lives finish their course, but mighty and triumphant, conscious of supreme victory even in the hour and article of death.

Mr. Warriston saw nothing of this wondrous panorama, for his eyes were closed; but he was seeing other things, and they were not pleasant things to see. This Eleanor knew, as she turned from looking at the sky to mark the expression on her father's face. She did not speak, however, having already learned the mysterious value of silence. And Mr. Warriston understood her; this she realized by the grateful smile which for a moment hovered over his worn features. The shadows were now deepening rapidly; for the evening twilight in August, though brilliant, is short. Indeed, with sundown, night is close at hand; particularly on the Hudson, where the high banks, lifting themselves into the sky, shut out the light yet lingering on the hills.

Derwent, with instinctive delicacy, withdrew from the Warristons almost as soon as they had

been comfortably settled in their chairs, Westerhall going with him, so father and daughter were left to themselves.

After a long pause, Mr. Warriston, in a low, sad tone, said:

"Your summer, Eleanor, thus far has been a strange one, and now that you are going away from home it is likely to be even more strange."

This was not the first time Mr. Warriston had made this remark, nor the first time he had spoken to Eleanor of these things. And yet there was a wistful inquiry in his voice, as if he would have her reassure him. Her reply, therefore, was more to his tone than his words: "Strange it has been, undoubtedly, and sad as well; but now that you are so much better, brighter days are ahead."

"You think so?"

"Most assuredly."

"You speak with confidence."

"Why not? A country life is full of possibilities. Beginning all over again, with a chance to profit by our experiences, has many advantages. Who knows to what proportions we may both develop? Already I can see you hale and hearty, eager for the sound of the dinner-gong, tramping through the fields, concerned about turnips and cabbages and corn, a learned authority on cattle-feed; then sleeping so soundly at night that you will know nothing till the new day breaks in pieces over your defenseless head."

"And you?"

"I shall wear heavy boots, hobnailed if I can

find them; dresses to correspond, a poke-bonnet of the coal-scuttle persuasion, and become a farm-eress of the first magnitude."

"Even then the picture is a fairly attractive one," Mr. Warriston replied, looking affectionately at his daughter.

"Thank you, sir, for my share of the compliment; for, of course, you include yourself as a burly farmer in the center of the canvas."

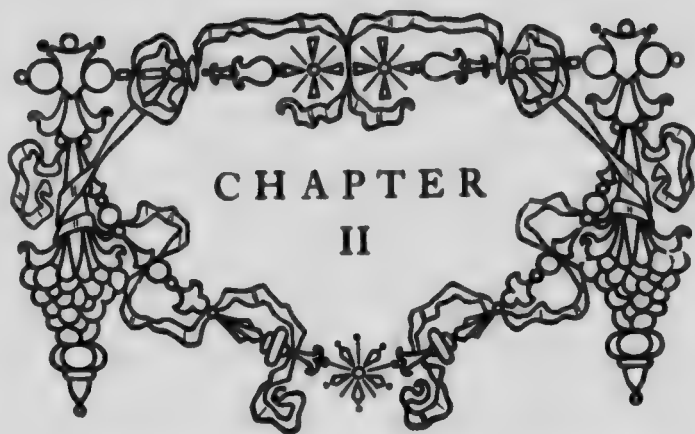
The words were spoken pleasantly, lightly perhaps, but Mr. Warriston did not see the pathetic little quiver on his daughter's lips, or the shade of sadness pass over her sensitive face.

Neither spoke again for some time, though the silence was not the result of either reserve or embarrassment. It was rather the silence of perfect confidence, when words are unnecessary.

And so the evening wore on, the shadows falling softly on the river, the light gradually fading from the sky. Then night came, gathering the weary earth within its dusky arms and stilling it to sleep.

Soon Mr. Warriston went to his room, Eleanor also retiring to hers, and, after a time, the decks were almost deserted.

But how plainly one could hear the beat of the paddles, and the water swishing against the vessel's side! And, like a mighty courser, the steamer rushed on, breathing flame and smoke through its iron nostrils, and quivering with the throb of its engine heart.



CLOSE up to the paddle-box, well within both shelter and shadow, two men were sitting. One was about forty years of age, of dark complexion, with a restless but strikingly handsome face, which bore the marks of eager and varied contact with the world. That he was strong, daring, unscrupulous, full of ambition and desire, would be the first impression suggested. Still there was something singularly attractive—fascinating, perhaps, would be the better term—in his appearance. The other man was considerably younger, ten years at least, and altogether unlike, both in bearing and address.

"It seems to me," said the younger man, holding his cigar between his fingers, looking on meanwhile upon the moonlit river, which just then was like a broad, silver ribbon, with dark, heavy edges, "that the restlessness and discontent of which you speak are often unnecessary. In such a world as this," waving his hand so the gesture included not only the river and the hills, but the

sky as well, 'life need not be the barren, hopeless thing you describe."

"Contentment, my dear sir," replied the other, in light, mocking tones, 'is only a word of three syllables found in dictionaries and books of devotion, but nowhere else."

"There is nothing startlingly new in that remark."

"No?"

"It has been used in various forms for thousands of years."

"Possibly: the fact however remains, and to dislodge a fact which is bedded in the experience of the centuries requires wisdom as well as genius."

"Suppose we permit the centuries to take care of themselves. They usually do. My concern relates to the present day and generation. Let us bring this matter nearer home."

"For what purpose?"

"That we may apply it to ourselves."

"The proper study of mankind is man."

"The only study of mankind is man. In what way does it affect us, how many stars there are in the sky, or the duration periods represented in the world's creation? A few million stars more or less, or a whole billion c^h years one way or the other, do not touch the actual life of the world. And the life of the world centers in two persons—a man and a woman."

"Another Eden," the mocking tone deepening to a positive sneer.

"Yes, another Eden, with an Adam and an Eve.

The man may be a soldier, a sailor, a merchant, a priest. He may sweep crossings in London, sell newspapers in Paris, wear a yellow jacket in Peking, or a frockcoat in New York, but in each case he is the same man, and his name is Adam."

"How about the woman?"

Again the tone was mocking, the speaker making no attempt to conceal his derision.

"What is true of the man is true of the woman," was the quick reply. "In Lapland she may live in a snow hut; in Switzerland, in a chalet; in London, have a mansion; in New York, an uptown hotel; but everywhere she is the same woman, and her name is Eve."

"Adam talks to Eve over a telephone wire."

"Yes."

"Eve uses a sewing-machine on her fig-leaves."

"What of it, so long as the sewing is done?"

"Adam digs with a steam-plow."

"He digs nevertheless."

"Eve finds her highest bliss at bargain counters."

"Only the fig-leaves in another form."

"And where is the famous apple-tree?"

"In to-day's wrongdoing; in to-morrow's newspaper. Every story of sin and crime is the story of Eden."

"And the Serpent?"

"Never was more manifest than now."

"Faugh! The world has outgrown that Arabian Nights' fable."

"But the idea of the fable remains."

"The whole thing is absurd."

"Pardon me; the idea is anything but absurd."

"It is an Oriental legend."

"It is the most absolute fact in human life."

"You mean that an Eastern parable born in the dreams of some Persian necromancer has any relation to people who are living now?"

"Certainly. Can you think of a crime that is not connected with forbidden fruit? In every ruined life do we not see the work of the Serpent?"

"We started on the matter of discontent."

"And what is discontent but a longing for the forbidden tree? And so intent are most of us upon the apple which we can not have, that the other trees are well-nigh forgotten."

Mr. James Bodell leaned back in his chair before making any reply. His lips curled derisively, and a mocking light flashed from his eyes.

"As a theorist, Mr. Carlisle," he finally said, maintaining his flippant, bantering tone, "you are destined to attain eminent success. But we can not all dwell on such altitudes. Most of us, perforce, occupy the common level; and on this level people have desires. These desires are natural; they attract the eye, stimulate the mind, and give to life all it has by way of enjoyment and variety. With some people these desires are stronger than with others, but it is all a matter of will. Then, again, there are those too indolent to strive for things which are beyond their reach. Many a man is a half saint because he is too dull or stupid to be anything else. The reason many people

have n't eaten that apple you talk about is because they lack the energy to pull away the fence or courage to climb the tree."

It was now Carlisle's turn to pause. Though so much younger than Bodell, he was more cool and easy in conversation, rarely raising his voice above its regular pitch. But from the emphasis which Bodell gave to his closing words, Carlisle felt that the subject had reached its limit. So he contented himself with looking at the river which just then was in comparative gloom, a thick cloud having overspread the moon.

"By the way," said Bodell, after a pause of considerable length, "did you see Mr. Warriston when he came aboard?"

"No," replied Carlisle. "Is he on this boat?"

Both tone and look indicated his eager interest.

"Yes; he got on just as we were leaving the pier."

"Was he alone?"

This question was asked with even more eagerness than the former one, Carlisle forgetting for the moment his calm, easy habit of speech. Bodell noted the evident anxiety of his questioner, giving him a keen, searching look. Then he replied:

"No; his daughter was with him; also young Westerhall. Westerhall is Mr. Warriston's nephew or cousin, I do n't remember which."

Nothing more was said for some time, each man waiting for the other to resume the conversation. The subject evidently was not a pleasant

one; yet both felt, now it had come up, that something more must be said. But, unlike a game of chess, the first move would be a disadvantage.

Bodell, conscious of a certain impatience which was growing stronger every moment, tried to work off some of his irritation by vigorous puffing at his cigar. He therefore blew out great clouds of smoke, accompanying each cloud with such stress of breath as to send it over the vessel's side. Then he moved restlessly in his chair, only to find each position more uncomfortable than the other one. More than once he flashed a keen and angry glance at Carlisle. But Carlisle's face was impassive. Whatever his thoughts were, he held them rigidly to himself. He sat with the utmost composure, giving no heed seemingly to the restless movements of Bodell. He had discovered, years before, that the quick, nervous man, however energetic or masterful, rarely has the power to sustain his speech at critical moments. He was familiar with the story of Samson, whose prodigies of valor, aided by the jawbone of a despised quadruped, are among the most wonderful on record; but he remembered that this same Samson committed suicide with his own jawbone when he gave the secret of his life to Delilah.

Ethan Carlisle was a lawyer, and was both keen and shrewd, but he had other and higher qualities of mind. Shrewdness and cunning seldom indicate breadth or vigor of intelligence. When a person approaches to the nature of a fox, he declines by just so much in real manliness. The wisdom of

the snake always means a likeness to the snake itself. But Carlisle's type of mind was of a very different order.

"Warriston's affair was of his own seeking," said Bodell, turning upon Carlisle with ill-suppressed anger.

"So I have heard," Carlisle replied, in a tone void of all feeling.

"But you don't believe it," was the angry response, each word spoken with an intensity which sent it like a bullet from a rifle.

"My belief one way or the other is a matter of no importance," said Carlisle, with the same achromatic tone as before. "Still, as I understand the matter, some one else was involved. A man like Warriston would not practically beggar himself without urgent reasons."

"You refer to his son?"

"If you say the affair was of his own seeking, why do you refer to his son?"

"I might have known better than discuss Warriston's affairs with you," said Bodell, rising from his chair, and with savage energy throwing his cigar over the ship's rail, watching it fly like a tiny rocket, then drop into the river. He was now furiously angry. But Carlisle seemed in no way disturbed. Not a sign of agitation revealed itself. To Bodell this was maddening. Heedless, therefore, of all restraint, he burst out passionately:

"The apple on your tree is Eleanor Warriston! I understand your parable now."

His words were barely spoken before Carlisle

rose up, and with a quick, contemptuous movement walked away, not deigning to make reply. Except for a glint in his eye, seldom seen there, and a compression of the lips not usual with him, no one would have suspected how keenly he felt the coarse, brutal words of Bodell. Nor was the barbed sentence an arrow cast at a venture. The bow was drawn hastily, but his aim was keen, and with intent to reach his quivering heart. He knew that Bodell was merciless, and to accomplish his purpose would use any means, however cruel. He could have replied, and with the same cool phrase as before—for his self-mastery was superb—but he refused to descend to the level Bodell had chosen.

After he had gone, Bodell lit another cigar; but it did n't burn to suit him, so he threw it away. Then he leaned over the steamer's rail, looking at some farmhouses which stood out clear and peaceful in the moonlight; but the frown only deepened on his brow, and the fire burned more fiercely in his eyes. After a time he returned to the saloon, hoping to find some people, acquaintances of his whom he had seen earlier in the evening; but the lights were turned down, and he saw only the stewards drowsing in their chairs, within easy hearing of the electric bells. Finding everything quiet, and being in no mood for a midnight promenade, he retired to his room.

But Carlisle was not the only one who heard Bodell's words, or felt their terrible sting. Not far from where he sat when speaking with Bodell,

a sad-faced woman, at her state-room window, was looking out upon the mighty parable of the night. Though weary with the care and anxiety of many days, her thoughts were crossing and recrossing each other, like the shuttle flying through the warp, weaving a web of mysterious pattern.

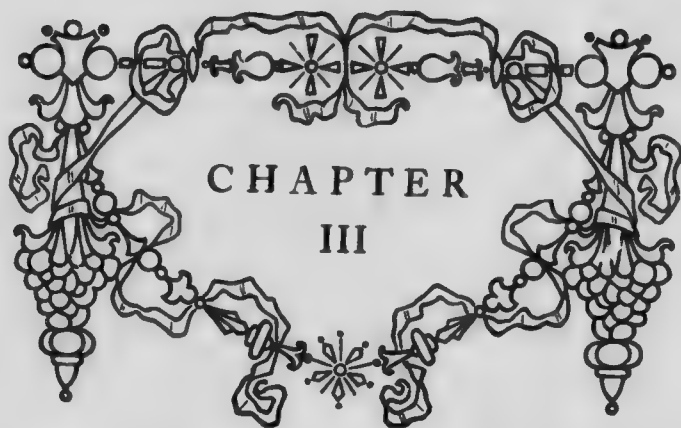
But the quiet sky was beginning to diffuse something of its peace upon her troubled heart: and the cool night-air, so grateful after the glare and heat of the day, was gradually quelling the fever in her blood. In another moment she would have shut her window, calm and tranquil, ready for the burden of the coming morrow, when she heard:

"Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now."

The voice she knew only too well, and with the recognition came both anger and shame. Quickly she shut the window, fearful of hearing the voice again. And now it mattered little to her that the sky was clear, and the heavens filled with light.

An awful darkness had fallen upon her soul, and when, after weary, despairing hours, her eyes closed in sleep, she could hear as in a dream:

"Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand - parable now."



IF Mr. Bodell had gone to the upper deck instead of the saloon, he might have found companionship; for Derwent and Westerhall were there. Nor would their conversation have failed to interest him, as just then they were speaking of the Warristons.

"I did n't know they were going out of town," Fred said, in his impetuous way. "In fact, I almost stumbled upon my uncle in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, about noon to-day, where I had an engagement with Sturgis. You know Win Sturgis. Mr. Warriston, though, is not my uncle, but a cousin of my mother. I have known him ever since I was so high," laying his hand on the upper rail of a camp-chair, "and I got into the habit of calling him uncle, which seemed the proper thing to do. Don't you think so?"

To this Derwent assented, but without special enthusiasm; for Westerhall's relationships did not concern him much.

"Seeing Uncle Warriston was a great surprise

to me," Fred went on; "but I was still more surprised to learn that he and my Cousin Eleanor were going up the river on this boat."

"Mr. Warriston has been ill, has he not?" Derwent inquired.

"Yes; but there has been more than sickness. I don't understand it, for my uncle is very close-mouthed at times. Still, by putting some things together, I have reached my own conclusions."

"Not always a safe thing to do," Derwent replied, indifferently.

Derwent had peculiar notions respecting the sanctity of personal matters. The noble virtue of curiosity, the only virtue some people seem to possess, had no place in his list of endowments. He therefore tried to divert Westerhall's thoughts in another direction. But there are times when the current is so strong that it rolls on, heedless of any attempt to change its course. This was now the case with Westerhall.

"I won't say that Uncle Warriston was sand-bagged—that perhaps would not be the right term—but there was robbery, arrant robbery. Of that I am sure. It is likely that those who took part in it could not be arrested as burglars or highwaymen; but that is the class they belong to. And there came near being murder as well as robbery, for Uncle Warriston had a shock which almost killed him. Then, his son Robert has gone off somewhere in disgrace, and the shame of this is worse than everything else. The whole thing is terribly sad. I am awfully sorry for my Cousin

Eleanor, and I mean to do everything I can to help her."

Westerhall stopped, for which Derwent was grateful. Already he had heard more than was his right; more, by far, than Westerhall should have told him. But men, and women too, need to be careful when they discuss private matters on river steamers. For the wind, instead of dispersing words as it does on land, bears them with singular clearness to listeners whom we do not dream of.

Carlisle, after leaving Bodell, came to the upper deck anxious to find a secluded spot where he might think out, and fight out, something of the passion which had been aroused within him. Seeing a vacant chair under the shadow of a lifeboat, he sat down, and, taking off his hat, allowed the cool night-air to play upon his burning brow. Though his face was impassive as marble, and there was neither quiver nor movement on his lips, yet a mighty passion possessed him, a tempest, that stirred his deepest soul. These men who are calm, self-contained, suffer infinitely more than the creatures of impulse and anger. To open the sluiceways of wrath, and allow the raging torrent to escape, is an easy thing to do; but to hold one's self as in the hand of a giant; to grapple with the demon which has broken loose in the soul; to take him by the throat with such a grasp that not even his incoherent ravings may be heard; to force him back to his mysterious hiding-place, riveting anew the chains upon his mighty limbs,—to do all this, with a face in which no trace of passion can be

found, requires an effort of which few are capable. This Carlisle could do; but to him, as to all others of his kind, there came the terrible reaction.

The waters, churned by the paddles, flung against each other by the remorseless beat of the iron blades, rushing as if in mad fury to break into waves of wrath on the river's bank, fierce, restless, rising as if from unknown deeps, suggested the awful struggle in his soul. And still Bodell's words rung in his ears. Everywhere he turned, the mocking face of Bodell presented itself. Then he would hear the taunting voice: "Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now."

But a peace from a source far beyond the stars, and infinitely more gracious and healing than any anodyne of earth, came upon him, and looking up to heaven he silently gave thanks.

After a time the murmur of voices broke upon him, in which the name of Warriston was spoken, and, before Carlisle could recover from his surprise, Westerhall had given Derwent the story to which he listened so reluctantly.

"It is time to turn in," Derwent said, rising from his chair. "For fellows cooped up in the city as we are, a night on the Hudson is glorious. And such a night, too! But there is a to-morrow which has for me a long train-ride. I will therefore take the balance of my moonlight out in dreams."

"No dream for me when I can have the reality," Westerhall replied, also rising from his chair, only, however, to reach for another one which looked

more inviting. Then he proceeded to make himself still more comfortable by using his former seat as a foot-rest, lighting a cigar, and assuming an attitude of picturesque enjoyment. Derwent still lingered; for, in all truth, he was loath to go below.

"I have my opinion of a man who can leave such a scene as this," Westerhall said. "Moonlight on the hills, a sky almost cloudless, air so cooling to the leaved brow, the whole deck to sprawl over—and huddle within the limits of a state-room 'cabined, cribbed, confined,'—I never knew before what that meant. The poet evidently had you in his mind."

"I know some men who set up as poets, who have nothing whatever in their minds," Derwent answered, slyly.

"One on me," Westerhall remarked, at the same time blowing out a cloud of smoke.

Then they both laughed, each at the other, after which Derwent went to his stateroom, leaving Westerhall in undisturbed possession of the deck.

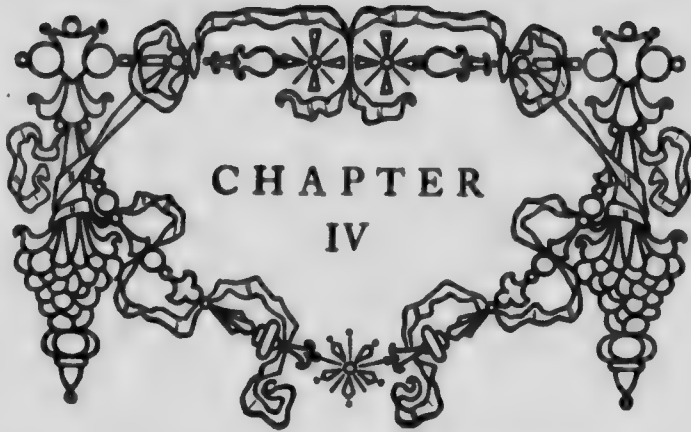
Next morning, soon after the boat came to her dock in Albany, Derwent hastened to the railroad station. Mr. Carlisle, at the ticket office, made sundry inquiries about the Adirondacks, but before taking his seat in the train he sent a telegram to New York:

"A week of Saratoga waters would be good for the Dolphin.
E. C."

This rather singular message he addressed "Mr. Hobart Craig, New York," who received it later in the day, and attended to it in due form.

Mr. Bodell remained on board the steamer for nearly two hours after most of the other passengers had left. But there was no immediate hurry in his case, as he was going to Saratoga, and could get a train at almost any hour. Still he regretted not having gone earlier; for, as he was leaving the boat, he came face to face with the Warristons. Mr. Warriston, who was leaning upon his daughter's arm, supported also on the other side by Fred Westerhall, looked at him as if horror-stricken, and for a few moments was so nervous and frightened as to be almost helpless. Miss Warriston felt her father's shiver of dread before she saw Bodell, and wondered why he was so disturbed. Mr. Bodell had both desired and dreaded this meeting. He could not but observe the effect of his presence upon Mr. Warriston, and also the look so manifest on Miss Warriston's face. Still he came forward, and, in the most courteous terms, asked if he might not render some assistance. Miss Warriston's reply was not given in words. There are times when words are the coarsest and clumsiest form of speech, no more adapted to the needs of the moment than a blacksmith's tongs to a watch movement. She therefore only looked at Bodell, but that was sufficient to make further reply unnecessary. A man's tongue, however skilled and plausible, has small chance against a woman's eye. Mr. Bodell's tongue was both fluent

and keen, but, as compared with Miss Warriston's eye, it seemed like a wooden sword measuring itself against a blade of Damascus steel. But being a man of consummate art, he covered his defeat with a forced smile, and a bow too profound and deferential to be unmixd with mockery. Soon he was on his way to Saratoga, and later in the day the Warristons started on their journey northward.



RIDGEBURG could not by any possibility be regarded as a village of vigorous enterprise. Situated fully six miles from the railroad, thus involving a stage-ride neither romantic nor exciting, it was not a popular resort in any sense of that term. Its name, however, was not a misnomer, for the village in most parts occupied a ridge, from which the thrifty farms sloped down on either side. Several of these farms were skirted by lakes, to which title the sheets of water had valid claim, for they were too large and dignified to be called ponds.

Standing well back from what was known as the street, so far as to have something of a lawn in front, there was a house of the usual order of village architecture. Two fine old trees, stately and luxuriant, on each side of the walk leading to the front door, gave to this house an air of impressiveness, also suggesting both permanence and comfort. True the farm connected with this house was not large, neither were the family overbur-

dened with luxuries; still they managed, not only to get a good deal out of the land, but even more out of life. They lived on their farm, not in it. Life for them had larger meanings than hay or potatoes or garden truck. The corn rustling under the summer wind, the fruit ripening or mellowing with each passing day, the cattle lowing at eventide, meant more to Abram Derwent and his good wife Sarah, than so many cans of milk or crates of market produce. When they allowed Ruth, their daughter, to spend nearly two years in a distant city attending school, all Ridgeburg was surprised; but the Derwents never offered any explanation. Seeing that Stephen, their only son, had business aptitudes, they encouraged him, finally securing for the lad an opening in New York.

A little after the noon hour on the day Stephen was expected home, Abram Derwent, contrary to all custom, took a chair from the dining-room, set it under one of the big maple-trees, and, bringing out his corncob pipe, proceeded to make himself fairly comfortable. It was a hot day, and the long, leafy arms of the maple were a pleasant shield against the glare of heat. Mr. Derwent had been idle most of the forenoon; but things were so far along that he could afford a few hours' indulgence. But if he had been remiss, Mrs. Derwent amply atoned for it. She had been awake long before the birds, coming downstairs by early twilight to complete her preparations for Stephen's home-coming. Hardly once did she stop to rest, going from one

place to another with untiring feet. Huldah, a grim-visaged spinster, who had been a member of the Derwent household for many years, wondered "how ever Missis could keep a-goin' so." But if Huldah should ever become the mother of a big, strapping son, whose face she had n't seen for a whole year, and who was coming home to spend his vacation, she probably will "keep a-going" just as Mrs. Derwent did. This contingency is somewhat remote; for not only is Huldah grim of visage, but full fifty years have passed over her maidenly head.

Mr. Derwent had not more than fairly started with his corncob, when the baker's cart announced its coming; for Mr. Jewitt used a handbell with both skill and effect. Mrs. Derwent at once came to the gate; for she remembered Stephen's boyish regard for certain delicacies peculiar to Mr. Jewitt.

"The Libbys have got a tenant after all," the baker remarked, turning from the cart into which Mrs. Derwent was looking critically, and speaking to Abram.

"You don't say!" replied Abram, moving the corncob, and looking in a surprised way at Mr. Jewitt. "I did n't think they had any show for a tenant this season. It's rather late for folks to come to Ridgeburg. But I'm glad on Mrs. Libby's account."

"Yes; and the best of it is, they have taken the place just as it stands, and expect to remain on into the fall," Mr. Jewitt announced, meanwhile drawing out a canvas bag, from which he took

some change, giving it to Mrs. Derwent, who had made sundry purchases and tendered him a dollar-bill in payment.

Mr. Jewitt was not expeditious in these matters; still he made few mistakes, which is the main thing in life, after all.

"You do n't know who these people are?" Mrs. Derwent asked, moving slowly towards the gate, her purchases in one hand and her change in the other.

"Mrs. Libby says they are New York people," Mr. Jewitt replied, giving the canvas bag a twist, and leisurely winding its drawing string, preparatory to dropping it into his pocket.

"Then perhaps our Stephen knows them," Mrs. Derwent remarked, with a little motherly pride. She had a vague notion that Stephen's position in the Gotham Bank gave him acquaintance with almost every person of consequence in New York.

"P'raps he does," Mr. Jewitt answered, in a noncommittal way, moving up from the back of the cart. "Mrs. Libby told me there was just two of them, father and daughter, and the father was real sick."

"She did n't say when they were coming?" Mrs. Derwent asked, with some eagerness.

"Some time this week, she thought. The agent's letter said they would leave New York yesterday. But the father, being sick, would delay them some. Anyhow, they won't be much later than to-morrow or next day."

Mr. Jewitt had now gathered up the reins, and

was about to put his foot on the step when Mrs. Derwent asked her final question:

"Did Mrs. Libby give you the name of these people?"

"No. I was careful to ask her, but she said the agent who rented the place just mentioned a father and daughter, and didn't give any name."

With this, Mr. Jewitt climbed up to his seat, a proceeding which the horse understood, for he at once put himself in motion, though not with startling abruptness. A little time, therefore, passed before the baker's cart reached the bend of the road, which took it beyond the range of Mrs. Derwent's eyes.

"I do hope Stephen is acquainted with these New York people," she said to Abram, who, after his first remark to Mr. Jewitt, had taken no part in the conversation.

Mr. Derwent made no reply, though he looked at his wife as she spoke, listening carefully, too.

"I wonder what ever induced them to take the Libby cottage at this time of year?" Mrs. Derwent went on, talking as much to herself as to Abram. "I'm afraid they will find it lonesome. Well, we must be neighborly, whether Stephen knows them or not."

"The old gentleman, being sick, will make it hard work for them at the start," Abram said, putting the corncob down on the grass beside his chair. "I'll go over to the Libby cottage in a day or two and see if we can do anything for them. As you say, we must be neighborly."

Just then Huldah came to the door with an inquiry which involved Mrs. Derwent's presence, not an unusual proceeding on Huldah's part.

"I wonder what she is like?" Ruth said, as, with duster in hand, she sat down for a minute or two to discuss the people who had rented the Libby cottage.

"Mr. J. Mitt did n't know," Mrs. Derwent admitted, rather sadly; for she was conscious that several important elements were lacking in the baker's exciting piece of news.

"But how could he know?" was the natural question; "for Mrs. Libby had n't seen these people, and knew nothing of them except what the agent wrote. And agents rarely send photographs of the people who rent houses for the season," Ruth said, gravely. "The house perhaps would object. It is out of all harmony for Corinthian people to occupy Queen Anne cottages, or women of Dutch architecture to live in Gothic houses."

The look of blank amazement on Huldah's face only caused Ruth to add with even greater gravity:

"Houses have rights which people should respect. We have furniture to match, hangings to match, decorations to match; why not people to match?"

As Huldah had no more imagination than an iron pump, her appreciation of Ruth's fancy touches was about as definite as the laughter of a tortoise when its shell is being tickled with a feather. This Ruth understood, so she went on:

"People think sometimes that brick and mortar

have no feeling; but they have. And when you hear the doors crack, the windows rattle, the ceilings fall, it is the house expressing its sense of wrong. Is it not so, mother?"

Seeing a smile on Mrs. Derwent's face, Huldah had a vague notion that Ruth intended some pleasantry; but the point, or idea of it, was utterly beyond her.

"Some people live in houses no more fitted to them than a man's overcoat would fit a wooden clothes-pin. Then, again, other people are all house, and nothing else. They have a parlor in their hat, a sitting-room up their sleeves, a dining-room tied around their waist; they have cellars in their shoes, and their whole sky is a plaster ceiling."

The reference to the overcoat and the wooden clothes-pin Huldah understood fairly well; but, when Ruth spoke of people having parlors in their hats, her countenance attained such vacuity that Mrs. Derwent laughed outright, one of those genuine healthy laughs rarely heard from women on the senior side of fifty.

There was small fear of Mr. Derwent being late for the train on which Stephen was expected to arrive. Every few minutes he looked at his watch—an honest silver one, which, so far, had never failed him—still it seemed to be going slowly, for some reason or other. He put it to his ear to make sure it had n't stopped; then he wound it up; after which he went in and compared it with the kitchen clock, which he had set that morning.

Not feeling quite certain, he marked the afternoon sun—a common thing in Ridgeburg, where no electric-bell sounds the noon hour, nor factory whistles blow at a given time.

"You won't be late for the train?" Mrs. Derwent called, coming to the door.

"No," answered Abram, taking out his watch again, and looking at it with renewed interest.

"What time does Stephen's train get in?" Ruth said, speaking from a window in Stephen's room.

Ruth knew exactly when Stephen's train would get in. They all knew. More than two weeks before, Abram Derwent had brought a time-table from the station, and every day since, that time-table had been consulted. But Abram looked at his watch again, telling Ruth what time it was, and when the train would arrive.

"Better be early than late," Mrs. Derwent remarked, sententiously, again coming to the door. "The kitchen clock is inclined to be slow."

"What time have you?" Abram asked, rising from his chair under the maple, and, taking out his watch, he held it open in his hand while Mrs. Derwent stepped in to look at the kitchen clock.

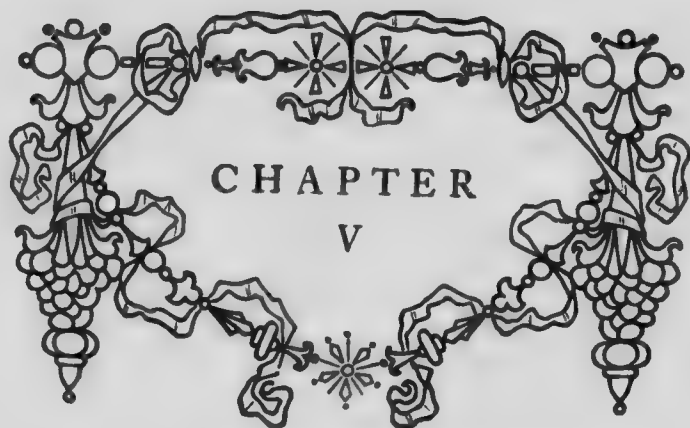
"Ten minutes after three," she answered; "but I would n't depend on the kitchen clock."

"I set it this morning, and it's right with my watch now."

"Yes, but your watch may be slow. I think, Abram, it's time you were going."

He was at the station at least an hour before train-time; but when the train finally came in, he

had the comfort of seeing Stephen standing on the car platform, who waved his hand to him in glad recognition. Soon he was in the buggy with his father, and on the road to Ridgeburg. The horse, as if conscious of the eager, expectant hearts who were waiting at home, started off in a vigorous trot, nor did his pace slacken much until the house was reached, where Mrs. Derwent and Ruth were ready at the gate to give him hearty welcome.



TRUE to his word; a day or two after Stephen's home-coming, Abram Derwent went to call on his new neighbors. It was early in the forenoon when he drove up to the Libby cottage, and, after hitching his horse to the post near the front gate, he went to the door, giving the bell a ring which could be heard all over the house. A young woman, tall, of serious face, answered the bell by opening the door, and looking inquiringly at Mr. Derwent. Now, Abram was no Aaron, with easy, flowing speech, more to be desired at times than the precious ointment which ran from the beard of that distinguished divine, reaching even, as we are told, to the skirts of his garments. So for a few moments he stood looking at the young woman in a helpless way; but finally, raising his weather-stained and somewhat frayed straw hat, he said:

"Good morning, ma'am! My name is Derwent. My place is just a little way down the road; and I called to see if there was anything we could do

in helping you to get settled. We heard your father was sick, and I thought I'd come over and inquire."

There was something so frank and kindly in Mr. Derwent's manner, that Eleanor Warriston—for it was she—was touched by it, and accepted his coming with sincere gladness.

They had arrived at Ridgeburg the day before, both utterly exhausted—Mr. Warriston with the exertion of travel, Eleanor with the strain, both mental and physical, under which she had been living for some months past. It surely was a strange home-coming for the Warristons, unlike anything they had ever known. The new day, however, had brought something of peace and rest. The cottage was homelike and cheerful, pleasantly situated upon the ridge. In the distance, hills lifted themselves one above the other, while forming a mighty background were mountains whose lofty peaks reached into the measureless sky. The lakes, within easy walking distance, partially hidden by clumps of trees, seemed all the larger and more impressive for being thus obscured. Then, everything was so still! And how pure and sweet the morning air! With what clearness could be heard the song of the birds, and how grateful was the perfume of the flowers! Already a sense of rest was diffusing itself; and these two stricken hearts, like tender plants trampled under reckless feet, began to raise themselves into the light, and once more put forth hope and trust.

"You are very kind," Miss Warriston answered,

gratefully. "My father was able to come down to breakfast this morning, but is still much wearied by the journey."

"I'm very much pleased indeed to hear it," Abram said, evidently referring to Mr. Warriston being able to come down to breakfast, and not that he was still much wearied with his journey.

"My women folks would be very glad to come in and help you," he went on, turning the straw hat between his hands, though looking at Miss Warriston as he spoke. "Things, of course, are all strange here, and p'raps my people could make it a little easier for you at the start. If you say so, Mrs. Derwent or my daughter Ruth will come over right off. It's only a little way, and no trouble at all."

"It is exceedingly thoughtful of you," Miss Warriston replied, speaking even more gratefully than before, for the genuine simplicity and unaffected kindness of Mr. Derwent touched her deeply. "Please thank your wife and daughter for me; but Mrs. Libby has so arranged matters that we shall be able to manage quite nicely just at present."

Abram Derwent, having accomplished his errand, had no further excuse for detaining Miss Warriston at the door; but, not being familiar with the procedure of city life, he hesitated, wondering what was proper under the circumstances, continuing meanwhile to slide the rim of his hat between his fingers. He was not fully satisfied with the result of his call. Miss Warriston had de-

clined, though gratefully, his friendly offers. A consciousness of failure was beginning to come upon him when Miss Warriston said:

"Mr. Derwent, I deeply appreciate your kindly call this morning. I feel already as if we had friends in Ridgeburg. In a few days my father will be both able and g'ad to see you. He has been very ill, but is now much better."

"Then I'll call again, and soon, too," Abram answered, cordially, turning away and putting on the well-worn hat, though evidently in no hurry to leave. Walking slowly down the path to the gate, he made some remark upon the little flower-beds upon which Mrs. Libby had bestowed so much care, also calling Miss Warriston's attention to several fruit-trees that seemed unusually promising. By this time Miss Warriston had come out from the doorway, and was standing on the porch listening interestedly to what Mr. Derwent was saying, so delightfully simple in his manner of speech, that more than once Eleanor found herself smiling at the genial, kindly humor of her visitor.

"That building over there," he said, pointing to what seemed a schoolhouse, "is our city hall, public library, courthouse, general academy, and cathedral. We go to church there on Sunday; we send the children there on week-days; we hold our elections and patriotic celebrations there, when Ridgeburg turns out in overwhelming numbers."

To this Eleanor replied with a smile so definite as to contain the germ of a gentle laugh

"That building a little further down the street is our emporium, our commercial center, our board of trade, in which the vast interests of this city are conducted. When you first enter it you may think it is only a country grocery-store, owned by Simon Tibbetts and conducted by him in person. But the importance of that building will grow upon you, just as Simon himself will, the more you know of him."

Again Miss Warriston smiled, and more definitely than before. And of this Abram Derwent was fully aware. More than once his keen but kindly eyes had traveled swiftly to Miss Warriston's face, seeing there more than appeared on the surface, and reading from it much that to other men would have remained unknown. So he went on chatting and talking, incidentally giving Miss Warriston valuable hints and suggestions concerning matters which had not occurred to her.

"But do n't you trouble, now, about anything. Just remember we live next door, and will be glad to serve you in anyway we can. Ruth is the school-teacher here; but she is having vacation now, so you need n't be surprised to see her any time."

Having staid much longer than he intended, Mr. Derwent moved out to the gate, unhitched his horse, and, getting into the wagon, drove rapidly away.

Having some matters to attend to in the village, Abram Derwent did not get home until late in the afternoon, and, as Stephen had gone with his mother and Ruth to Stapleton on a general

expedition of shopping and sight-seeing, the family did not meet for some hours. When Mr. Derwent spoke of his visit to the Abby cottage he was deluged with questions.

"What is she like?" Ruth asked. "Is she young, old, stout, scrawny, tall, short, red-haired with freckles, blue-eyed with dimples? Tell us, won't you? We are just dying to know."

"How can your father tell us anything, Ruth, unless you stop talking? One can't get in a word edgewise when you fairly get started," Mrs. Derwent laughingly remarked.

"An inheritance, mother mine," answered Ruth. "Is n't there a proverb about things being bred in the bone coming out in the flesh?"

"Yes; but they are not all to come out at the point of one's tongue," Stephen said, playfully coming to his mother's rescue, for she was no match for the nimble-witted Ruth.

"Be quiet, Stephen! Please allow father to proceed." Ruth spoke in the tones of the school-mistress, and being rather a dainty little lady, with a face as sweet as it was attractive, her assumption of authority was more amusing than impressive.

Mr. Derwent started in again, doing fairly well, though subject to repeated interruptions.

"Tall," repeated Ruth; "well, so is Nancy Jane Hanks, who has not yet achieved an alarming reputation for beauty. You remember her, Stephen?"

"What, Stilter? Can I ever forget her? And does she still raise her lofty brow into the patient sky?"

"With dark, earnest eyes," Ruth continued, ignoring Stephen's questions. "Go on, father. The plot thickens; the mystery deepens. Enter villain; to the rescue, fond lover; lights low, fiddles slow—"

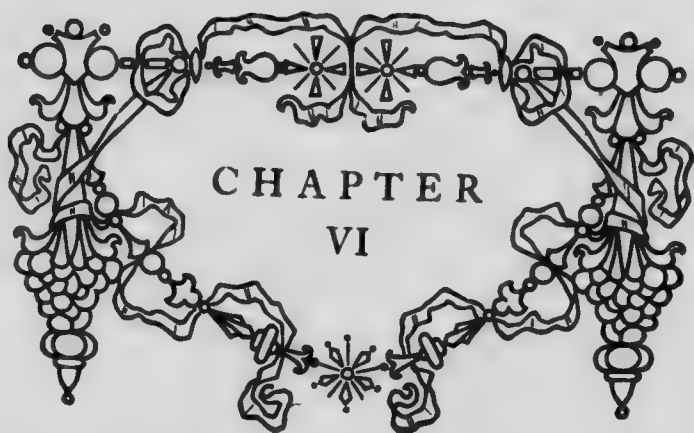
"Ruth, will you never stop?" Mrs. Derwent protested.

"This tall, serious-eyed, but distressed damsel makes me think—"

"Go at it gently, Ruth. That is something you are not accustomed to," Stephen remarked, softly.

"Now for her name?" Ruth asked. "The key to the mystery may then be in our hands, and who knows but even Stephen may get an idea, and thus prove that the age of miracles is not past."

"You do n't know her name!" Mrs. Derwent exclaimed, incredulously. "Well, of all things!" she said a moment later, a remark into which wonder, disappointment, baffled curiosity, and pathos had been interjected in almost equal proportions.



RIDGEBURG rarely treated itself to a genuine sensation, so when one happened to come in its way it created something of a disturbance. And this was the case, most assuredly, when Austin Tremaine, a young clergyman from New York, came there to spend his vacation; for he was unlike any other of his class that Ridgeburg had ever known. Being a big, strapping fellow, full-blooded, full-chested, eager, restless, he was not content to doze in a hammock or snooze under the trees. So the first thing he did was to organize himself into an athletic club. He introduced golf, performing wonders with the elusive balls, sending them over all sorts of barriers with a skill which many envied, but none could imitate. He played football, kicking the responsive pig-skin so high and so far that the Ridgeburg small boy looked upon him with awe. Arrayed in bathing-gear, he would paddle his boat to the middle of the lake, where the water is of mysterious depth, and, jumping off, swim about like a fish, with no

more sense of danger than if drowning was a miracle. He would go trouting, beating every stream and brook within the country, returning sometimes with a big string of fish, and then at other times with nothing but the string. He went out in all weathers, and for all kinds of sport, even taking an occasional turn in the hay-field, where he would work for hours as if his bread depended upon it. There was nothing clerical in his garb, and the cheap, broadbrimmed straw nat which he wore most of the time was, as he wrote to a college chum, "the crowning feature of a most imposing and becoming garb."

At first the Ridgeburg people were not a little scandalized; but Mr. Tremaine was either unconscious of the feeling he had aroused, or calmly indifferent to it. The latter probably.

Arrangements having been made with an impecunious student for the vacation Sundays, Mr. Tremaine was not asked to take any of the services, which were held in the building known generally as the meeting-house. But it so happened that the student's father was stricken with a serious and sudden illness. The embryonic clergyman, therefore, departed somewhat abruptly, leaving the Ridgeburg flock without a shepherd.

Two or three dear old men met in Tibbetts's store to talk matters over. They looked at each other gravely, then they spoke solemnly; after which each man shook his head with a pious emphasis, deeply impressing the half-dozen of lookers on. Mr. Tibbetts, being busy, took little part in

the conversation, though he dropped a word at times, evidently favoring some arrangement whereby Mr. Tremaine might be secured. But the first meeting did not decide the matter. When Ridgeburg had such an important question at issue, it must have ample time for discussion.

Shortly after this meeting in Tibbetts's store, an ancient brother came to see Abram Derwent, and talk the matter over with him.

"Called to be saints," the ancient brother said, in reply to a remark of Abram's; "but who can think of a saint kicking a football or whirling a golfstick."

"I don't want any saint to preach to me," Abram hastily interposed. "The average saint is n't worth his salt. These mewling, puling creatures who are whimpering and whining, have no more blood than a turnip, and less bowels than a ha—"

"Why, Abram!" Mrs. Derwent said, reprov-
ingly.

"One good man of honest flesh and blood is worth a wagonload of saints. The reason some people want the wings of a dove is because they haven't gumption enough to use their hands. Why shouldn't we invite Mr. Tremaine? Probably he won't wipe his weeping eyes, but he will talk sense, and say something worth hearing."

As a usual thing, Mrs. Derwent's "Why, Abram!" had its designed and desired effect; but there were times when her remonstrances produced even less result than the throwing of corn-

balls at an alligator. In this particular instance his blood was up. Deacon Tompkins, who led the opposition to Mr. Tremaine, was the meanest, grubbiest man in the county, a pious old humbug, who had n't done a kindly or a generous thing since he was born, an event which took place almost seventy years before. As for Josiah Higgins, another of the opposition, he could hardly be trusted to pass the contribution plate! But Josiah was an authority on "doctrine." He was also mighty in argument. Proof texts rolled off his tongue after the manner of a surveyor's tape-line. Then his eloquence in the form of lengthy prayer or tiresome address was never lacking, though contributions of a more material form were abhorrent to his spiritual mind. A heaven peopled by such men as Deacon Tompkins, or Josiah Higgins, had no special attractions for the young men and maidens of Ridgeburg. The picture of the one sitting upon the steps of a celestial mansion, running his coarse, horny fingers along the strings of a harp; or that of the other, holding an interminable argument with some one as long-winded as himself,—excited no tumultuous desire on the part of the Ridgeburg people to witness these sublime exhibitions. Indeed, so utterly unregenerate were many Ridgeburgians that they preferred not to go to heaven at all, at least not the heaven to which Deacon Tompkins and Josiah Higgins were going.

And now to have this Philistine, this big-footed, big-handed Goth, this uncircumcised Hercules.

whose whoop could be heard clear across the lake, whose laugh was almost profane, and whose example already had disturbed all Ridgeburg,—to have such a man minister in their meeting-house seemed rank sacrilege.

A bright Sunday morning it was, with such a gathering in the meeting-house as Ridgeburg had rarely seen; for Mr. Tremaine had consented to take charge of the service. Having umpired a ball-game the afternoon before, doing it so thoroughly that each man played his best, both teams were out in force, occupying seats in the gallery. Jake Simmons, who thought he could pitch horse-shoes with any man in the township, but who found more than his match in Mr. Tremaine, was at service that morning, the first time for several years. Tom Mayhew, a careless, good-hearted fellow, who had challenged Mr. Tremaine to a swim across the lake, but who gave up the race when the young clergyman began to swim around him, just to keep himself warm, Tom meanwhile splashing and blowing at a great rate, was in the congregation that day, a matter of some surprise; for Tom rarely overworked his church privileges.

As for the young ladies—well, not within the memory of Isaac Thurber, who was commonly regarded as a contemporary of Noah, was there such a company as assembled that August morning in the Ridgeburg meeting-house.

Mr. Warriston, though not able himself to attend, urged Eleanor to go, and with such effect that she yielded to his wishes. She went early,

hoping to avoid special observation ; but being one of the few strangers present, she could not escape eager attention. Nor was it any wonder, for Ridgeburg seldom had such a visitor. Some people might not call her beautiful in the artistic meaning of that word, but to catch certain expressions on her face would be the supreme joy of a real painter. There was something in her eyes, on her lips, a mysterious light quivering across her countenance, as if her pure, strong soul, for the moment, had revealed itself. Then the glow and radiance would become shadowed, as though a cloud had entered her sky, directly in line of the sun. But the shadows were not deep, and there was strong light behind them. Hence the impression only added to the beauty as well as the strength of her face. Then, a sense of power was distinctly manifest ; not that power which is often seen on the faces of imperious, dominating women, of which, too, they are always conscious, but a mysterious pervasive force, suggestive of unknown reserves of character and will.

Probably few of the Ridgeburg people gave these things much thought, as they glanced quite frequently at Miss Warriston. The feminine portion of that congregation did not fail, however, to observe her simple but effective costume, and also the easy, graceful way with which she bore herself ; for she had that indefinable bearing which is so easily recognized but so difficult to acquire—a possession of incalculable value, and more to be desired than rubies.

Miss Robins, on the little wheezy organ, played something which she was pleased to call a "Voluntary," after which Mr. Tremaine announced the opening hymn. But where is that mighty voice which the day before rang out, "Strike two!" "Out at first!" "Safe!" Where are those stentorian tones which frightened even the crows from their nests in the woods? With rare delicacy he read the tender lines, putting new meanings into the familiar words. And then he prayed in tones so soft and low as not to hush the songs of the birds, whose rich, full notes blended so sweetly with the joys of that Sabbath morning. His sermon was a revelation to Ridgeburg.

"Adam and Eve," he said as he began, "is your story and mine, the story of every man and woman in the world, the story of even the world itself."

Then he went on for a full half hour, talking in the most sane, human way, showing that temptation comes in some form to every life, and that the forbidden tree was the cause of all discontent and the source of terrible unhappiness and sin. He spoke in the easiest, simplest way, so that all could understand him. He said nothing about the New Jerusalem; hence Deacon Tompkins had no opportunity to "weep his wiping eyes," as a Ridgeburg maiden was wont to remark. Neither did he discuss the story as related in Genesis, saying that it made no difference to the lesson whether it was an actual history or merely a parable. This grievously disappointed Josiah Higgins; for, concerning this chapter, more than a score of times he had

argued half through the night. Nor was anything quoted from the "fathers," or reference made to Darwin or Huxley. It was a flesh-and-blood sermon from beginning to end.

Abram Derwent rubbed his hands in a way which expressed much inward enjoyment. More than once he looked at his wife with a funny little smile when Mr. Tremaine made some quaint remark or used a homely illustration. He even so far forgot the proprieties as to reach his foot along the floor and touch Stephen's ankle with his toe. Then again he would turn almost half way in his seat that he might observe the effect of Mr. Tremaine's discourse upon the congregation.

The half hour was not long in passing; but there was one person from whom the preacher failed to secure undivided attention. Try as she would, Miss Warriston's thoughts went back to the steamer; once again she was at her stateroom window, and she could hear: "Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now." She knew from whom those words had come, and also to whom they were spoken. She was conscious, too, of what they implied; and this, more than all else, filled her with indignation and shame. No wonder, then, that her thoughts wandered at times, and breaking in upon Mr. Tremaine's sermon she could hear the mocking echo: "Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now."

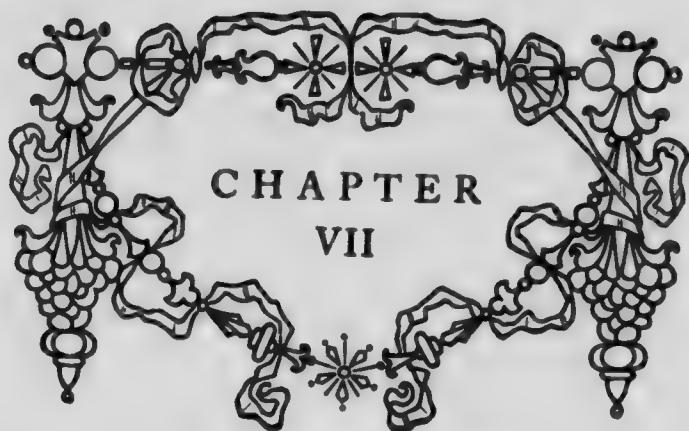
When the service was over, Stephen Derwent, knowing a number of his friends would be present,

turned around to look over the congregation, and, to his amazement, saw Miss Warriston. Not once had he associated her with the Libby cottage. From what Fred Westerhall had said, he thought the Warristons were going in another direction. To see her here was, therefore, a grateful surprise; and, by her smile when she saw Stephen, her surprise was equally grateful. In a moment he had made his way down the little aisle, receiving from her a most cordial greeting. By the time he had asked her about Mr. Warriston, their trip down, and if she knew where a letter would reach Fred Westerhall, the aisle was open, allowing the Derwent family to move up to where Stephen was standing with Miss Warriston. This gave him an opportunity of introducing his mother and Ruth. Mr. Derwent required no introduction; for when Eleanor saw him she instantly held out her hand, smilingly saying:

"Please remember your promise to call and see my father."

The vestibule was still fairly thronged, so were the steps outside, also the walk leading to the street; for Mr. Tremaine had not yet come out, and a goodly company were waiting to speak with him. Miss Warriston, therefore, was the subject of a careful observation as, with the Derwents, she walked in the direction of the Libby cottage.

But all that afternoon while Ridgeburg was discussing the sermon of Mr. Tremaine, Eleanor could hear: "Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now."



BUT let us not forget Mr. Bodell. Of that, however, there is no immediate danger; for he belongs to a class whom to remember is painfully easy. Mr. Carlisle remembered him, distinctly too, and though miles away, traveling as fast as the train would carry him, he could plainly see Mr. Bodell's mocking face, and hear the echo of his cruel words.

Miss Warriston also had good cause to remember him, and many others as well, nor was the memory in any case inspired by gratitude or affection.

But Mr. Bodell was not deeply affected by these things. The philosophy of his life was both simple and definite,—get all you can, anyway you can, keep it while you can, and let the world generally go to Bagdad.

Nevertheless, when he parted from the Warristons on the Albany boat, his frame of mind was anything but pleasant. For the dread and fear on Mr. Warriston's face he cared nothing what-

ever, but the look in Miss Warriston's eyes was terribly definite. The scornful curve of her lips, though finely drawn, could not be mistaken. His dark eyes, therefore, always bright and piercing, had a dangerous gleam. His mouth, never kindly at best, was drawn in hard, set lines. And there was something more than anger on his face; for anger is nearly always open, with warning signals to denote its presence. Mr. Bodell was never frankly angry, and, no matter what his stress of passion, he rarely showed any expression of it beyond a bitter sneer or a mocking phrase. Hence, when he reached Saratoga, no one would have suspected that he was not in love and charity with his neighbors; for a more bland, easy, courteous gentleman could not anywhere be found.

Evidently he had plenty of money, for his rooms at the "United States" were among the choicest of that well-known hostelry. Every afternoon he took a turn on the famous drive, his horses being worthy of comparison with any in Saratoga. He gave little parties at the lake, in which he showed himself a generous host. He soon became quite popular; for though no one knew much about him, still a well-groomed, handsome man, in the prime of life, apparently wealthy, and a bachelor as well, could not but meet with general favor. And Saratoga rarely annoys its guests with impertinent questions. People there have a way of accepting each other without formality or restraint. One introduction easily leads to another. The question is not, "Who is he?" but, "What is he?"

and the man who seems to have the wherewithal can enter any circle he desires.

In the smoking-room, Bodell met Tom Allen, a casual acquaintance, from New York; that same evening Allen presented him to Mrs. Endsleigh, a lady of varied graces and fascinations; through Mrs. Endsleigh he was favored with an introduction to Miss Aylesbury, an acknowledged leader in Saratoga circles; so almost immediately Mr. Bodell took his place in the front rank, being accepted without hesitation or gainsay. He, therefore, had no cause for complaint. He was invited to little suppers, parlor dances, card parties, as well as more stately functions. And everything that came he accepted; for he liked good things to eat, pretty women to dance with, a lively game of cards, or anything else of that order. One evening, as he was leaving the hotel, a special delivery messenger gave him a letter evidently of some importance, judging by the haste with which he opened it and his interest in its contents. Moving from the door, but within easy distance of the light, he read:

"DEAR JIM,—The last of the Warriston hoodle went to-day. The price did not quite reach our figure, but I thought it best to let the stuff go. Your share has been paid into the Gotham. Keep me posted. As ever,
N. S."

This singular epistle Mr. Bodell read carefully, frowning at times as if not well pleased. Perhaps

he objected to being addressed as "Jim." Possibly the use of the term "boodle" was offensive. Such expressions as "Jim," "boodle," and "boodle" were surely not in keeping with evening dress and outward appearance so elegant as that of Mr. Bodell. Calling for a blank he went over to the large table in the reading-room, and, after thinking for a few minutes, wrote a telegram:

"Sorry you sold Montana. Buy back without fail. Will write J. B."

"Going to Maitlands?" said Tom Allen, as Mr. Bodell disposed of his telegram.

"Yes; you?"

"Yes."

"Then we can go together."

"Carriage?" said Allen.

"At the door," answered Bodell, to whom Allen's laconic form of speech had now become familiar.

Then they went out, Bodell neglecting to take up the letter which he had put aside when writing his telegram.

A nice, kindly old gentleman, clean shaven, clerical appearance, whose face was strikingly benevolent, and who fairly beamed upon this generate world through gold-rimmed spectacles, saw the letter, which Mr. Bodell had evidently forgotten. But for some reason he did not call attention to it. Instead he quietly moved up from where he was sitting, covered the letter with a

newspaper which he had in his hand, then taking another New York paper from his pocket, read steadily for perhaps half an hour. There were only two or three people in the room when Mr. Bodell came in to write his telegram, and these had gone out one after the other; so the clerical-looking old gentleman was now the only one present. After a time others came in, some of them talking loudly, which seemed to disturb him, for almost immediately he reached for the newspaper which covered Mr. Bodell's letter, and in his haste took it, and the letter as well, going at once to his room.

As neither Mr. Bodell nor Mr. Allen seemed alarmingly anxious to meet their hostess or her guests, the drive to Maitlands occupied considerable time. The evening air was delicious, summery, but crisp and vigorous; much soft, clear light lingered in the sky; the horses were fresh, the roads were good, the after-dinner cigar of special flavor; small wonder, then, that an hour soon passed under such pleasant conditions.

Nor was the hour altogether profitless, at least not to Mr. Bodell; for he made many suggestive inquiries, most of which Tom Allen answered unsuspectingly.

"The Maitlands?" repeated Allen, "say rather 'the Maitland,' for in point of fact there is only one."

"Is n't there another one?" Bodell asked, with a guileless smile.

"Yes, somewhere. Seldom visible, though."

"Peculiar sort of man?" Bodell suggested, look-

ing meanwhile at the sky, in which clouds were massing themselves in wondrous form.

"Peculiar sort of woman," Allen answered, flicking the ashes from his cigar, then leaning back more easily in the carriage.

"In what way?"

"Notions, hobbies, fads of all kinds; suffragist, scientist, general reformer; hence the other Maitland takes to the woods."

"Bright woman, though; at least I should judge so."

"Bright, yes; but a mighty uncomfortable woman to get along with. When she gets fairly started she would give the earache to an Egyptian mummy. And then she takes up with all sorts of people."

"You seem fairly intimate with her."

This was accompanied with a smile which, like Hebrew, had to be read backwards.

"She is a relative of mine; not very close, though. Maitland himself is a good sort. Always liked him."

"Miss Aylesbury is something of a personage," Bodell remarked, as he looked at his watch, when, finding it was yet early, he lit a fresh cigar, passing the case to Allen.

"Rather," was all Allen said, as he proceeded to light the new cigar from the butt of the old one.

"Money?" questioned Bodell, leaning forward to speak to the coachman.

"Her father has. Rummy old cove. Ever met him?"

"No."

"Strange. Thought every one in New York knew Aylesbury. Bank director, and that sort of thing. Real business note-shaver."

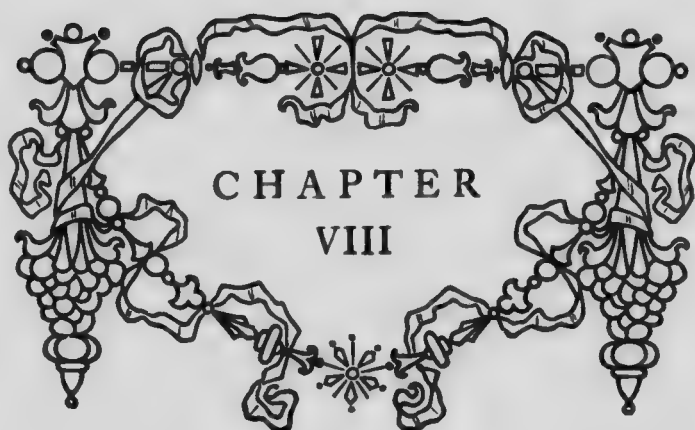
"Stocks as well?"

"Shady stocks mostly. Mines and stuff of all kinds. He's a downy bird."

"Feathered his own nest?"

"Feathered is n't any name for it."

In a few minutes the carriage drove up to the Maitlands', and in another few minutes Mr. Bodell and Tom Allen were forming a part of a numerous and miscellaneous company.



MRS. MAITLAND had a way of accepting herself which, from certain standpoints, was really admirable. No woman could possibly say less with such a profusion of words, or mean less in so many varied and distinct tones. She was deliciously insincere, and exquisitely untruthful. So she gushed, she overflowed, she held out both hands to comparative strangers, she effused in generous proportion. Hence she was exceedingly popular, almost every one declaring that Mrs. Maitland was a most charming woman.

She was within whispering distance of forty, though no one would have suspected it; for nothing in her face or in her manner gave evidence of such a thing. Then she had the art of so wearing clothes that they did not wear her—a sure proof of artistic genius.

"Mr. Bodell!" she exclaimed, as he presented himself with Tom Allen, "I am delighted to see you. But why so late? I was beginning to think you were not coming."

The perfect smile and grateful look which accompanied this cordial greeting were not without effect; for how was Mr. Bodell to know that she had not once thought of him during the evening?

"As for you, Tom," addressing Allen, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself, coming in when other people are going out. But you must make up for it by staying that much later."

She did n't like Allen, having a suspicion that he took sides with Mr. Maitland. But that Tom regarded her as a chattering little humbug never once entered her amiable mind.

"I want you to meet Mrs. Deveral," she said to Mr. Bodell. "She is a most wonderful woman; so entertaining and original. You are sure to be delighted with her."

Mr. Bodell courteously expressed his desire to meet the distinguished lady, in whose honor the gathering had been arranged.

Later in the evening, to a chosen circle, Mrs. Deveral gave expression to certain views, of which she was an acknowledged exponent.

"I did n't ask to be born," she said, in a tone which admitted of no doubt, "hence I assume no responsibility in the case."

The air of high tragedy with which this profound utterance was given suggested manifest injustice somewhere. To bring a person of such consequence into this world without a certificate of approval was certainly a highhanded proceeding. With most people the matter of being born is a mere incident, a circumstance of no moment

whatever ; but in the case of Mrs. Deveral, so vast and complicated were the interests involved, she was amply justified in refusing to accept any obligation.

Two involuntary spinsters of mature but uncertain years, with scrawny necks and obtrusive cheek-bones, felt that a great wrong had been done Mrs. Deveral. Another female, of mannish air and mien, whose dresses had side-pockets, into which she thrust her hands with the grace of a Kentucky colonel, loudly sympathized with Mrs. Deveral. A little, wizened German professor, whose high intellectual life had been attained chiefly through Bavarian beer, strong tobacco, and Heine's poetry, gazed rapturously upon Mrs. Deveral ; that is, as rapturously as his winking, blinking eyes, hidden behind huge spectacles, would allow. Under such noble encouragement, Mrs. Deveral went on :

"By what right was I thrust into this world without any choice or volition of my own?"

The marked emphasis upon "this world" implied that Mrs. Deveral might have consented to honor some other world with her presence ; but to bring a woman of such transcendent abilities to a planet of common, meager dimensions, was an outrage upon the harmonies of creation. Mrs. Deveral did not intimate, in any definite way, how her consent might have been secured. She doubtless thought that the company whom she was favoring with such sublime sentiments had mental capacity to arrange ways and means of their own. Some things are so simple, so thoroughly elemen-

tary, that even to make mention of them is a waste of time.

Tom Allen, great, stupid blunderhead, could n't see any sense in what Mrs. Deveral was saying, so he went over to a couple of nice, innocent-looking girls in another part of the room, and talked with them of golf and college boat-races, and other common things. But Tom never ranked high. Some of the "elect" said he was dull, that he could n't understand Browning, and, if a choice were given him, he would rather attend a ball-game than a lecture on Theosophy.

There was something of contempt in Mrs. Deveral's eyes when she saw Allen withdraw from the favored circle; but those remaining were so sympathetic that not to resume would be cruelty to them. Therefore she resumed:

"And now, being here without personal desire, what remains for me but to take the world exactly as I find it?"

What indeed? And how kind this was of Mrs. Deveral! Only think of what might have happened had she refused; for a woman of her eminence to have repudiated this world, would have meant for our poor earth a deeper eclipse than when the moon, standing on the hearth-rug, stretches out its coat-tails in the most offensive way.

The eloquence of Mrs. Deveral produced immediate results; for the masculine female at once unpocketed both hands, running one through the short, bushy hair which erected itself over her

noble brow, and with the other making gestures both ample and expressive. Then she spoke, in accents clear but not mild:

"To me, life is simply an appropriation of that which pleases. The world is here, I am here. The world was made for me, I was made for the world. What we want is a larger appreciation of life; not a life within barbed-wire limits, but the bird-life, with all the freedom of the sky; the fish-life, with the sweep of the boundless sea; the lion-life, with the untrammelled realm of the forest."

In a certain sense, which, however, only the unregenerate can understand, the speaker may have been a "bird," for some godless young men had so designated her; and, being puffy, with lopsided propensities, sundry persons, when speaking of her among themselves, had alluded to her resemblance to a porpoise.

Her desire, therefore, for the attributes of the bird and the fish were being attained. But no one had accused her of being a lion. A certain adventure with a mouse—when she, well no matter—was yet a vivid remembrance.

Mrs. Deveral smiled, a conscious superior smile, in which several others joined.

But the professor did not smile. The allusion to barbed-wire limits did not appeal to his sense of humor. Among these lovers of freedom the professor was ranked as a martyr, who, rather than violate his principles, had suffered the horrors of a prison. Concerning this time in jail the professor was becomingly modest. But such is the

despicable tyranny of certain foreign Governments that, in their police records, they basely refused to class the professor's crime other than common theft, even making marks opposite his name on the prison register which would indicate his habit of frequenting such institutions!

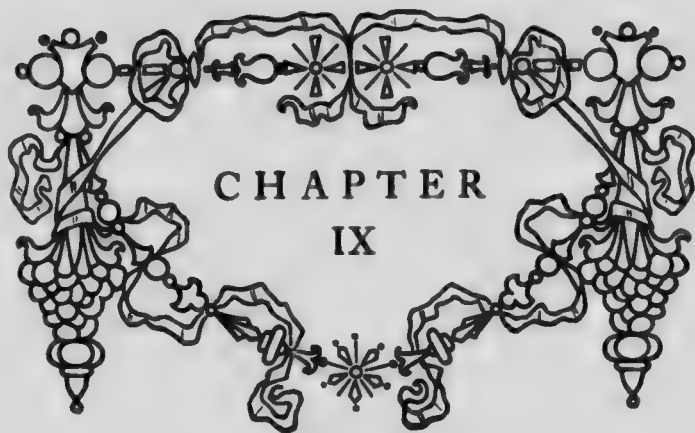
Then one of the involuntary spinsters spoke. This spinster was musical, at least she so referred to herself; but those who had heard her either play or sing have been known to make remarks openly and positively profane.

"This world is a wondrous organ," she softly murmured, her face wearing a rapt, ecstatic expression, "with a great variety of stops, and capable of almost infinite combinations. My life is the keyboard which controls this noble instrument, and it is for me to draw forth such exquisite music as will flood my being with mysterious harmony."

Here the gentle creature sighed, a long, patient, expressive sigh, in which wistfulness and yearning were very manifest. This tender and poetic outburst so affected Mrs. Deverall that she was compelled to retire behind her fan for a few moments to conceal her emotions.

"Mr. Bodell, just think how you have deserted me!" said Mrs. Maitland, now joining the group. "But I can't blame you," smiling at Mrs. Deverall, contriving also to give each member of the little company a labial token of her good will.

Then she led Mr. Bodell away, pleasantly remarking that her duties as hostess required his kindly services.



WHEN the dear old gentleman who had so innocently taken Mr. Bodell's letter reached his room, he proceeded to do some things out of all harmony with his benevolent appearance. First of all, he opened the letter, though on the envelope, plainly written, was Mr. Bodell's name. Then he read it even more carefully than Mr. Bodell had done. After this he made two copies of it, placing one in a large envelope with some private papers, the other he inclosed in a special wrapper, and addressed it to a correspondent in New York. These things being done, he went downstairs again, and, watching for a favorable opportunity, put Mr. Bodell's letter exactly where he found it less than an hour before.

Mr. Bodell did not think of this letter till late in the evening, and was annoyed at not finding it in his pocket. He remembered laying it down on the reading-room table, but could not recall taking it up again. Usually letters from his partner, Noel Stennett, were destroyed when read: a wise pre-

caution in view of their peculiar relations. A vague sense of uneasiness interfered somewhat with his enjoyment of idle chatter, and he wished a dozen times he had not been so careless.

Tom Allen's remark regarding Miss Aylesbury led Mr. Bodell to pay her considerable attention. Such homage, however, was no unusual thing with her. Something, either the supposed wealth of her father or her own personal attractions, made Miss Aylesbury exceedingly popular. She had any number of admirers. Men of all grades, shades, orders, and conditions paid willing court to Miss Aylesbury. Like a certain Mary upon whom poetry has lavished itself, giving us in wondrous rhyme the story of rare devotion on the part of a juvenile sheep, so everywhere Miss Aylesbury went the crowd was sure to go.

"How did you escape?" she asked Mr. Bodell, in stage confidence, glancing into the next room where Mrs. Deveral was surrounded by her eager disciples.

"Mrs. Maitland was my deliverer," he answered, pathetically. Then, turning to Mrs. Maitland, he said in whispered theatrics:

"From henceforth my life is at your service."

At this they all laughed, though of course it never occurred to them that they were laughing at the guest in whose honor they were assembled. Verily the ways of fashionable society pass all understanding.

"You had been informed that she had been born without her consent?"

"Yes."

"That she would assume no responsibility whatever?"

"Yes."

"That she would accept the world as she found it?"

"Yes."

"O Geneva!" Mrs. Maitland said, laughingly, as Miss Aylesbury, in her frank, audacious way, summed up Mrs. Deveral's theories, and, with wit both keen and brilliant, served them anew to Mr. Bodell.

In all truth Mrs. Maitland was a most charming and interesting hostess.

On returning to the hotel, Mr. Bodell went to the reading-room, and, to his great relief, found his missing letter just where he had laid it on the table, though covered carelessly with a newspaper. The old gentleman with the gold-rimmed spectacles sat near the table reading a serious-looking magazine, absorbed evidently in its contents. But a close observer might have noticed a singular movement of his eyes when Bodell opened the envelope. The same keen scrutiny would probably have discovered the faint outline of a smile as Mr. Bodell, after again reading the letter, tore it into little pieces and threw them into the waste-paper basket. Then Mr. Bodell went to his room, the old gentleman soon following, his room, however, being on another floor.

It may have been the high stimulant of Mrs. Deveral's wisdom, or Miss Aylesbury's daring

manner of ridicule, but for some reason Mr. Bodell was not inclined to retire. So he concluded to write some letters. The first was a reply to Noel Stennett.

"I wired you this morning, as a letter would not reach you in season. That Montana stuff is all right. Do n't fail to get hold of it again. When we got it from Warriston, it was n't worth much; but within the past week, so the G. P. informs me, a move has been made that will boom the whole business. A big raft of copper is in sight, but mum is the word. Be sure and get our stock even at an advance. On the boat I came across Carlisle. He is a cunning dog, and means trouble. He knows all about the Warriston deal, so we must keep track of him. But he can't do much harm for a month, as he is in the Adirondacks.

"Old Aylesbury is here. His daughter is one of the swells, a regular high-flyer. She introduced me to her father, and we bowed and grinned as if meeting for the first time. If Miss A. knew as much of her ancient daddy as we do, she would n't carry so many streamers.

"I have track of some little lays which may work out later. Hope you are enjoying Long Branch. Let me know about Montana. J. B."

When this letter was finished Bodell lit a cigar, which he smoked half through; but, finding himself still indisposed for sleep, he wrote another epistle, though not to Stennett.

"——When did you hear of the Warristons? The madonna and her father were on the boat with me, but our conversation was not extensive. I would like to know where they are going, for reasons which you can understand. Robert is still invisible. What a simpleton he is, and how easily he played into our hands! I hope he is at the bottom of the sea; for it would be awkward if he showed up before we carry out our plan.

"Stennett is working Long Branch. For a guileless youth, Stennett is a marvel. He is in with Hawksby, running a pasteboard shop and coffee-stand, where fools go in with full pockets and come out with empty ones.

"Wish you could have been with me to-night. I am just in from an idiotic reception given in honor of our old friend, Mrs. Deveral! She didn't recognize me; at least she gave no sign. But you know what a sly old fox she is. Strange, to meet her after all these years! A silly creature entertains the illustrious Mrs. Deveral, where I met a lot of howling swells, mostly women—funny women too. What swarms of young fools there are in this town! But more when I see you.

"J. B."

Having in this classic way disposed of his immediate correspondence, Mr. Bodell retired for the night.

It is not an unusual thing for a hostess and her guest of honor to have various sweet and confidential confabs, more particularly after some spe-

cial event in which both were prominent. Hence Mrs. Maitland and Mrs. Deveral, though long past midnight, amused and instructed each other by discoursing of the chief characters who had attended the reception.

"You are very hard on dear Miss Aylesbury," Mrs. Maitland said, in a purring tone.

"One could n't be too hard on such a creature," was the angry reply.

"I do n't blame you for feeling bad," rejoined Mrs. Maitland, purring as before, though at heart much pleased that Miss Aylesbury had so definitely and with such audacity disposed of Mrs. Deveral.

Mrs. Maitland was finding Mrs. Deveral tiresome. There was also too much of her. No woman can gracefully pose as an apostle of sweetness and light with a waist-line almost invisible and a waddle like that of a duck. Mrs. Maitland resented the lack of correspondence between Mrs. Deveral's aerial theories and her ponderous corporosity. Then her lips were thick, her chin repeated itself, her face shone unctuously, her eyes were beady, with neither lashes nor brows in definite quantity. A tufted mole here and there, while breaking the monotony of her face, added really nothing to its beauty. From every point of view, Mrs. Deveral offended the delicate, artistic taste of Mrs. Maitland. But Mrs. Deveral was a reformer, a woman with a mission, a loud proclaimer of the new gospel. The daring of Miss Aylesbury in making pub-

lic sport of this exalted being, and definitely rejecting her sublime theories, was an example Mrs. Maitland secretly admired, but lacked the courage to follow.

"She is a bold, flippant creature," Mrs. Deveral continued. "She has no mind whatever. The low, common views which she takes of life are simply disgusting. What men see in her to admire I can't imagine."

"Mr. Aylesbury is rich," Mrs. Maitland suggested, suppressing a yawn.

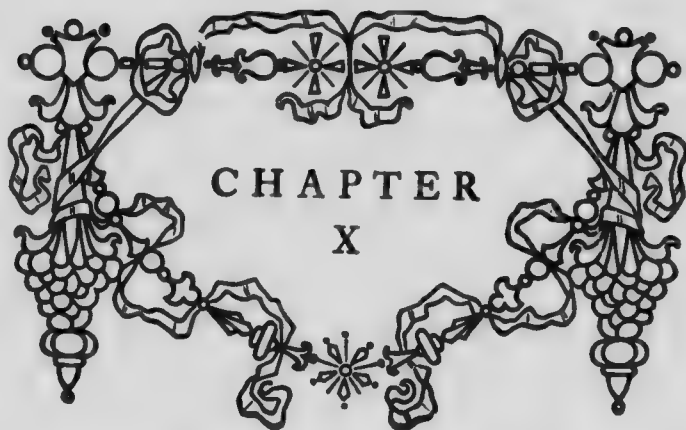
"Mr. Bodell, I noticed, was quite attentive to her."

To this remark, Mrs. Maitland made no reply, hoping that a polite silence on her part would end the conversation.

"I have met that Bodell man somewhere," Mrs. Deveral said, using a phrase more striking than elegant. "He is older by a good many years, and has changed considerably; but I'd bet my boots I have seen him before."

"Excuse my thoughtlessness," Mrs. Maitland purred once more as she rose from her chair; "but just see how I have kept you up, and after such an exciting evening! It is really too bad of me. What a darling you are to let me stay here so long, without one word of complaint!"

So they kissed each other lovingly, and went to their rooms.



ABRAM DERWENT was not long in establishing pleasant relations with the Libby cottage. At first Mr. Warriston hardly knew what to make of his neighbor. He would say the keenest things without the least tinge of cynicism, and, though deliciously quaint in his humor, was never sarcastic. He was shrewd, but not cunning or subtle, differing in these particulars from most people.

The two men were sitting on the piazza one evening, Mr. Warriston in a steamer chair, a former boarder's legacy to Mrs. Libby; Abram occupied an old-fashioned rocker, enjoying his corn-cob pipe. They had been talking quite freely, but now both were silent, Mr. Warriston looking dreamily at the distant hills, Abram thinking over their conversation.

Mr. Tremaine had gone with a party to one of the lakes, and a merry party it was; for bursts of laughter, snatches of song, and gleeful shouts could be plainly heard.

Ruth Derwent had called for Miss Warriston, taking her to the other lake, where Stephen was waiting with his boat, and in the rich twilight they were lazily drifting on the quiet waters, which shone as though mingled with fire. It was just the evening for lovers, for dreamers, for souls to whom the world means more than clay or stone, and with whom life is a glorious mystery.

A nature so intense and sensitive as that of Eleanor Warriston felt keenly the spell of such an hour. The strain under which she had been living for almost a year was gradually relaxing. At first there had been the shock, startling and terrible, like a bolt from the clear sky. Then came the horror and shame, which, in turn, were followed by weeks of fearful anxiety when her father lay hovering between life and death.

There was the usual hollow commiseration, often prompted by vulgar curiosity; a pitiless pity more cruel than open censure. Nor did she fail to experience the cold neglect of supposed friends, one of the bitterest ingredients in the cup of misfortune. Sad moments she had at times; hot tears often dimmed her eyes; anger as well as grief frequently crowded her heart; yet, with a courage surprising even to herself, she bore up under a load which would have utterly crushed many others.

But, since coming to Ridgeburg, so complete had been the change in her life and associations, already a new feeling of hope and peace had come to her. The future had more of promise. Her heart was lighter. She was losing the depressing

sense of restraint and self-consciousness of the last months, and a larger, stronger life was growing up within her.

Sitting beside Ruth in the stern of the boat—a broad, flat-bottomed, uncouth-looking structure—with the evening light shining upon her thoughtful, sensitive face, she suggested, to Stephen's eye, a picture of gracious womanhood.

"Take care, Stephen," Ruth called out, in such tones as were heard from her occasionally in the Ridgeburg School.

Stephen glanced up quickly, then, with a couple of vigorous strokes with his left oar, headed the boat from a reef upon which it was in danger of drifting. Miss Warriston noticed this peculiar look on Ruth's face, and also Stephen's evident desire to hasten from that part of the lake. But she made no comment. Some questions, however, get into the air without clothing themselves in words; and they are as definite as the perfume which rises from a flower.

"Why not ask outright?" Stephen said, with a smile.

"I will now," she answered; "at least I will intimate that there is an inquiry in my mind."

Then Stephen told her, though with reluctance, of a sad boating accident connected with that reef. Two boys, brothers, many years before, had gone out in a boat one day, and the boat capsized on the reef, and the younger boy was drowned. "Ever since," Stephen said, "it has been called 'Bodell's Rock,' and people avoid it when they can."

"But why is it called 'Bodell's Rock?' Miss Warriston asked, Stephen little dreaming of the anxiety which prompted her question.

"Because it was Jack Bodell who was drowned, son of old Squire Bodell, who lives here in Ridgeburg."

"The other son escaped?" Miss Warriston said, turning her face so it was shadowed from the light.

"Yes," Stephen answered, speaking constrainedly; "but, from what people say here, there were ugly stories told of him."

"Do you remember anything of this?" Miss Warriston asked, including both Ruth and Stephen in her glance.

"O no," Ruth answered in a nervous voice. "We were not born at the time. It is thirty years, if not more, since it happened. I heard my mother speak of it only last week."

"And the little fellow's name was Jack?" Miss Warriston said, after a pause, during which Ruth and Stephen hoped the conversation might soon take another turn.

"Yes, the other one was James," Stephen answered, unconsciously making reply to Miss Warriston's unspoken question.

Then they began to talk of other things, but a feeling of constraint had come upon them.

"Bodell, James Bodell," Miss Warriston kept repeating to herself. "But it surely can not be the same."

Then she would try to put the matter out of her mind; but every few moments it returned, and

under her breath she could not refrain from saying: "O, it can not be! It can not be!"

The bowl of Abram Derwent's corn-cob, not being a capacious affair, required careful renewals at short intervals. Before replying, therefore, to Mr. Warriston's last question the corn-cob demanded his attention. Close observers of Abram had noticed that, when he desired to gain time without an embarrassing pause, his pipe needed immediate care. Abram had a way of thinking twice before he spoke once, a plan not generally adopted. His mouth was no rapid-firing machine, a mitrailleuse with numberless barrels all loaded and ready to go off at a touch.

"Well, it seems to me," he said, resuming his place in the rocker, "something like an elephant saying its prayers to a mouse."

Mr. Warriston smiled, then replied: "I do n't quite understand your comparison of the elephant and the mouse. There is an old fable of the mouse and the lion, but that has a meaning of its own."

"The way people get down before things so much smaller than themselves is what I mean."

"Perhaps you can make it still clearer," Mr. Warriston suggested, mildly.

"It was really Mr. Tremaine who said it, though in another way. He has been preaching to us for the last two Sundays on the apple of Eden, and he said there were men who would get up early and stay up late so that they might worship their own pocket-books. Funny, is n't it?"

Mr. Warriston smiled almost audibly, not so much perhaps at what Abram said as at his manner of saying it.

"That Mr. Tremaine is powerful smart. He said the world was full of people who would rather steal one apple off another man's tree than gather a bushel from their own. The way he talks about that tree beats anything I ever heard. That apple story used to puzzle me, but it does n't now."

Mr. Warriston, never having overstrained his church-going propensities, was not very familiar with the story of Adam and Eve. He hardly knew, therefore, what reply to make.

"Josiah Higgins, one of our Ridgeburg saints, has talked to me by the hour about that tree; but Josiah's idea is not much clearer than a bat's definition of sunlight, or a mud-turtle's observations on the poetry of motion."

This time Mr. Warriston actually laughed, perhaps the first time since coming to Ridgeburg.

"Then, there is Deacon Tompkins, a dear man, whose grief-condenser is always in working order; he has wept over that tree so his eyes were fountains of tears; but I confess the Deacon did n't move me much. You see, Mr. Warriston, these men talk about the thing as if it was away off somewhere, and took place thousands of years ago. Why, the whole business happened in Ridgeburg, and within my own knowledge."

"Then, this is the veritable Eden," Mr. Warriston remarked, unconsciously tinging his words with a mixture of humor and sarcasm.

"Yes, this is the veritable Eden. You see that house yonder?" pointing to a house which was easily visible in the twilight, for it was a handsome, colonial type of building, of dimensions and architecture fairly pretentious. "The apple brought ruin to that house. The mother is dead, the father is broken-hearted, and God only knows what has become of the son."

Mr. Warriston's face twitched, then paled as if he was suffering in some way. Abram Derwent saw that something had affected him, but turned away as if to look at the house of which he had just spoken. Then, moving along the piazza, he said:

"Some time I will tell you the story of old Squire Bodell. It is a sad one."

"Bodell! did you say?" Mr. Warriston asked, almost starting from his chair, and looking anxiously at Mr. Derwent.

"Yes, Bodell," Abram answered, pausing on the piazza steps, puzzled by the excitement which his mention of the name had caused.

"I knew a man in New York of that name," Mr. Warriston said, speaking in a hard, strained voice, evidently desirous of controlling his emotions.

"How old a man might he be?" Abram asked, standing on the walk which led to the gate.

"I can't say. I met him only a few times. Perhaps thirty-five or forty. But I don't know."

Abram knew by Mr. Warriston's voice and his short, catchy breathing that something connected

with the name of Bodell had stirred unpleasant memories in the mind of his neighbor. He was exceedingly sorry, therefore, that the name had come up in their conversation. But before he could express any regrets, or offer an explanation, Miss Warriston, with Ruth and Stephen, came to the cottage gate.

There was little sleep in the Libby cottage that night. Eleanor could not get rid of the story of "Bodell's Rock" and the mention of Jack Bodell's name. Mr. Warriston could hear, over and over again, Abram Derwent saying:

"Yes, Bodell, the father, is a broken-hearted man, and God only knows what has become of the son."



IN the drawing-room car of the train which a few hours before had left Albany, Ethan Carlisle sat, not reading as was his wont when traveling, but looking dreamily out of the window. His eyes rested upon one scene after the other through which the train was swiftly rushing; here ranges of hills, there rolling valleys; now dashing along an open country, again skirting quiet villages; at one time the hoarse whistle sounding out with terrible distinctness, another time the bell clanging sharply. But while he was not indifferent to the panorama which opened on either side, his thoughts were not with his eyes, but back on the steamer of the night before. The sneering face of Bodell rose up before him, and he could hear again those ever-recurring words: "Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now."

"This telegram for you, sir?" questioned the porter, coming up to Mr. Carlisle's chair, and holding out the familiar yellow envelope.

"Yes," answered Mr. Carlisle, glancing at the address.

"It was put on at the last station not more than five minutes ago," the porter said.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Carlisle; "it probably requires an answer," rising from his chair and going down the car to a writing-table.

Opening the telegram he read:

"Have secured Warriston's Montana. Can't you spend vacation there? Answer. H. C."

The telegram was from Hobart Craig, his confidential manager, a man whom he trusted implicitly. He knew that Mr. Craig had good reason to suggest this Montana trip, else he would not have sent this telegram. The securing of the Warriston interest, though not a surprise, still had not been expected so soon; and this materially changed the aspect of affairs. By this additional holding he had obtained control of a property in which several large interests were involved. To go out to Montana and take formal possession, and on the ground consider what was best to be done, seemed both the wise and proper thing to do. And yet to turn aside from these hoped-for weeks in the Adirondacks, a resting-time to which he had eagerly looked forward, was a serious matter with Carlisle. Not even Craig knew of the strange burden which Carlisle had borne for several years—a burden both sad and exhausting, and which could not be shared with any one. On



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



1.45

1.50

1.56

1.63

1.71

1.80

1.88

1.96

2.00

2.11

2.25

2.35

2.50

2.63

2.80

3.00

3.15

3.38

3.60

3.80

4.00

4.25

4.50

4.75

5.00

5.31

5.63

6.00

6.35

6.71

7.11

7.50

7.91

8.33

8.75

9.17

9.60

10.00

10.50

11.00

11.50

12.00

12.50

13.00

13.50

14.00

14.50

15.00

15.50

16.00

16.50

17.00

17.50

18.00

18.50

19.00

19.50

20.00

20.50

21.00

21.50

22.00

22.50

23.00

23.50

24.00

24.50

25.00

25.50

26.00

26.50

27.00

27.50

28.00

28.50

29.00

29.50

30.00

30.50

31.00

31.50

32.00

32.50

33.00

33.50

34.00

34.50

35.00

35.50

36.00

36.50

37.00

37.50

38.00

38.50

39.00

39.50

40.00

40.50

41.00

41.50

42.00

42.50

43.00

43.50

44.00

44.50

45.00

45.50

46.00

46.50

47.00

47.50

48.00

48.50

49.00

49.50

50.00

50.50

51.00

51.50

52.00

52.50

53.00

53.50

54.00

54.50

55.00

55.50

56.00

56.50

57.00

57.50

58.00

58.50

59.00

59.50

60.00

60.50

61.00

61.50

62.00

62.50

63.00

63.50

64.00

64.50

65.00

65.50

66.00

66.50

67.00

67.50

68.00

68.50

69.00

69.50

70.00

70.50

71.00

71.50

72.00

72.50

73.00

73.50

74.00

74.50

75.00

75.50

76.00

76.50

77.00

77.50

78.00

78.50

79.00

79.50

80.00

80.50

81.00

81.50

82.00

82.50

83.00

83.50

84.00

84.50

85.00

85.50

86.00

86.50

87.00

87.50

88.00

88.50

89.00

89.50

90.00

90.50

91.00

91.50

92.00

92.50

93.00

93.50

94.00

94.50

95.00

95.50

96.00

96.50

97.00

97.50

98.00

98.50

99.00

99.50

100.00

100.50

101.00

101.50

102.00

102.50

103.00

103.50

104.00

104.50

105.00

105.50

106.00

106.50

107.00

107.50

108.00

108.50

109.00

109.50

110.00

110.50

111.00

111.50

112.00

112.50

113.00

113.50

114.00

114.50

115.00

115.50

116.00

116.50

117.00

117.50

118.00

118.50

119.00

119.50

120.00

120.50

121.00

121.50

122.00

122.50

123.00

123.50

124.00

124.50

125.00

125.50

126.00

126.50

127.00

127.50

128.00

128.50

129.00

129.50

130.00

130.50

131.00

131.50

132.00

132.50

133.00

133.50

134.00

134.50

135.00

135.50

136.00

136.50

137.00

137.50

138.00

138.50

139.00

139.50

140.00

140.50

141.00

141.50

142.00

the lakes, with their tempting fish; through the woods, hunting for game; in the camp, with its bed of fir and a return to primeval conditions; under the stars in the cool night, so still and grateful; in the storm, the winds holding high carnival among the swaying, bending trees,—Carlisle for the moment forgot the pain and distress under which his soul had so long staggered. Thinking of these things, Mr. Craig's telegram lost its first impressiveness; so he resolved to let the matter stand over, and follow out his original plan. Taking a blank form from the holder, he wrote:

"Glad to learn of Montana. But can not change my plans now. Will write."

Just then his thoughts went back to the night before. Again he was on the Albany boat, and again he heard Bodell say: "Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now." Instantly his face hardened, and a gleam of anger flashed in his eyes. In another instant he had torn his telegram in two, and thrown it into the waste-paper basket. Then he wrote another message:

"All right. Will start for Montana immediately. Wire me at Chicago. E. C."

This he gave to the porter, requesting its dispatch at the next station. Then he arranged about his baggage, learning also from the conductor that

by taking a train at Hunterville Junction, where the express would stop, he could make close connections and save considerable time. This he concluded to do. In less than an hour, therefore, he was on the Hunterville platform, the express stopping there for a minute or two, then speeding on its way.

But his telegram never reached New York, for before the express reached its next station, a broken rail caused the engine to jump the track, throwing the train down a steep embankment. The engineer and fireman were both killed, their bodies so mangled and charred as to be almost beyond recognition. The same sad fate befell the porter who had taken Mr. Carlisle's telegram, for he was in one of the forward cars when the accident occurred. A number of passengers, in the day-coaches principally, were terribly hurt, several of them dying during the night. To add to the horror, one of these coaches burst into flames; for it telescoped with the baggage-car and engine, then crashed down upon the boiler fires. In this car was the conductor who had told Mr. Carlisle of the train which stopped at Hunterville Junction. Next morning the New York papers had long accounts of the disaster, giving Mr. Carlisle's name a prominent place among those killed.

Mr. Bodell, never much concerned with newspapers, gave still less heed to them at Saratoga. A column, therefore, with the heading, "Frightful Railroad Accident," had no attraction for his eyes. Hence he was not aware that Mr. Carlisle was

numbered with those who had been fatally injured. Had he known this, he would not have written as he did to Noel Stennett.

"How very dreadful! What a shocking thing!" Mrs. Maitland exclaimed, as she glanced at the big, bold type announcing the disaster; but, seeing on another page an attractive pattern of an autumn gown, she instantly said, "O, is not that pretty?" and straightway forgot all about the railroad horror.

Mrs. Deveral did not even look at the headlines which so affected Mrs. Maitland. Her only interest was in reading the report of a meeting at which she was the chief speaker. As Mrs. Deveral had sent this report herself, referring to her address as "one of wonderful power and eloquence, and given in that graceful manner for which this lady is so distinguished," it seemed highly proper that this item should receive her undivided attention. No one could ever charge Mrs. Deveral with failing to appreciate her own merits. As a trumpeter of her own virtues she never failed to reach the highest and clearest notes.

As the Warristons were on their way to Ridgeburg at the time of the accident, arriving late the night after, it is not surprising that they had no knowledge of it whatever.

But Mr. Craig read every word of the terrible story, and a look of horror came into his face when he saw Mr. Carlisle's name in the death-list. Only two days before, Mr. Carlisle had left the office, eager to meet his friends in the Adirondack camp.

How thoughtful he had been for his clerks, arranging for each of them a vacation while he was gone! With what genuine heartiness he had clasped Mr. Craig's hand as he bade him good-bye! These things, and many others, rushed in upon Mr. Craig as he stood holding the paper in his hand. Surely there must be some mistake. But the name was there, standing out upon the paper with terrible distinctness, while in another column was a brief notice of Mr. Carlisle's death, accompanied with some lines of editorial regret at the loss of so brilliant and promising a lawyer.

Mr. Craig was not long in deciding upon his course. In less than an hour he was on a special train, at sundown he had reached the scene of the wreck, and by midnight a more bewildered and perplexed man it would have been difficult to find. And no wonder, for he could not discover the least sign or trace of Mr. Carlisle. His body was not among the dead; of that Mr. Craig was most positive. Neither was he with the wounded; of that Mr. Craig was equally positive. And yet he had been on that train; for the telegraph office had his acknowledgment of Mr. Craig's telegram, and the time when he received it.

Mr. Craig had also searched through such baggage as had been saved, but nothing of Mr. Carlisle's could be found. His leather traveling-trunk had disappeared. A new har 'bag, one given him by his clerks on a recent birthday, had also gone. There was nothing whatever to indicate that Mr. Carlisle had even been on the train. And then

Mr. Craig was certain, knowing Carlisle as he did, that had he been on the train when the accident occurred, and escaped uninjured, he would not have left in this abrupt, mysterious way. He would have been among the most active in rendering every assistance in his power, not skulking off like a thief in the night. For him to disappear in this fashion was contrary to every habit of his life.

But where had he gone? He was not in any of the farmhouses which had so hospitably opened at this sad time. No one had seen him, at least not in such a way as to make identification possible. Not a trace or clue of any sort seemed to present itself.

But Mr. Craig, though considerably mystified, was by no means disheartened. Indeed, it was exactly the other way. Next morning he was up by daybreak going at once to the wreck, for gangs of men had been working all night, and it might be that other bodies had been discovered. But such was not the case. Then it began to dawn on Mr. Craig that possibly Carlisle had left the train before the accident occurred. The telegram suggesting the trip to Montana may have caused him to break his journey at some intervening station. This idea became more definite as he thought it over. So, on learning that there was a short cross-line some miles down the road, he resolved to go there at once. He accordingly procured a farmer's wagon and drove to the station, ordinarily a quiet little place where the station-master

acted as telegraph clerk, freight agent, train dispatcher, ticket-seller, and general man of affairs.

"Yes," the station-master said, in response to Mr. Craig's question, "a passenger got off here. He was just such a person as you describe. I remember his having a leather trunk, for I checked it and put it at the train. He was the only passenger who got off the express, and as he had to wait here 'most half an hour, I had a good chance to notice him."

"Did he mention where he was going?" Mr. Craig asked, now about convinced that Carlisle was the passenger referred to.

"No, except that he inquired about Chicago connections. I told him just where he'd strike the main line."

"He bought a ticket here?"

"But only to the main line. He said something, now that I think of it, of going up to Niagara for a day, and when he came back to Buffalo he would decide which road he'd take."

Knowing that Carlisle, though he had been to Niagara a score of times, always went there if only for a few hours whenever he was in that region, Mr. Craig no longer entertained any doubt regarding his safety.

And now another idea suggested itself, no uncommon thing with Mr. Craig. Indeed, Mr. Craig had ideas to spare, a condition of mental opulence to which few men attain. His thought now was, to turn to advantage the report of Mr. Carlisle's death. Unless that report was contradicted, it

would remain unquestioned for some time. Carlisle had no immediate relatives in New York. Most of his friends and clients were out of town. This Montana business was ticklish, there being more involved in it than appeared on the surface. If it were known that Carlisle was out of the way, some men might be less wary, and be led to commit themselves. Mr. Craig was probably familiar with that magnificent burst of poetic genius, "When the cat's away the mice can play," as well as the important principle which it so richly infolds. He concluded, therefore, to keep his stories and information from the reporters, allow the newspapers a free hand. Then he wrote to Clifton House at Niagara, saying he would arrive by a given train, using a cipher form of message which Carlisle would understand.

After this he wrote to Mr. Arnold at the New York office, telling him to give the clerks who had not already gone, a week's leave of absence, and close up the office for the same length of time. This Mr. Arnold did most cheerfully; for there was something in Mr. Craig's letter not intended for the public eye.

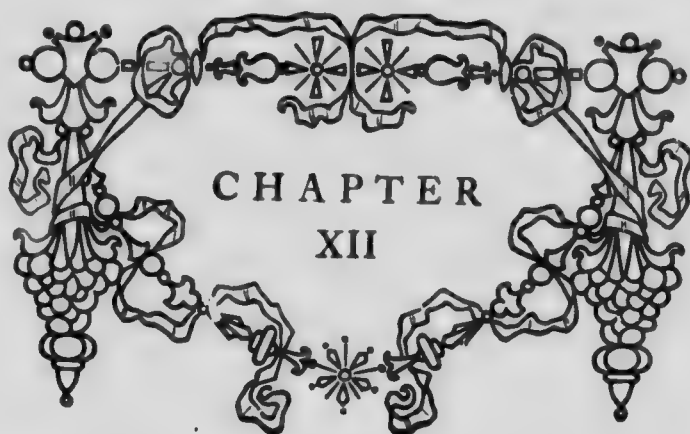
Next day, when the reporters called they found the offices deserted, every blind drawn, every door locked, nor was there any one on the premises who could give them the least information. In some of the evening papers it was stated substantially as follows:

"On our reporter's calling to make inquiry concerning the death of Mr. Ethan Carlisle, who was

fatally injured in the recent railroad accident near Hunterville Junction, he found the offices closed, all the clerks having gone to attend the funeral. It is understood that Mr. Hobart Craig, who has for many years been associated with Mr. Carlisle, will assume charge of the business. Mr. Craig is a most capable lawyer, and will have the best wishes of a large circle of friends."

How much of the above item Mr. Arnold is responsible for, will never be known.

Meantime Mr. Craig was on his way to Niagara.



MR. CARLISLE was sitting on the Clift House piazza when he received Mr. Craig message. He had just returned from visiting some of his favorite haunts; for he was as familiar with Niagara as many of the regular guides. In the winter season, more than once he had gone from New York that he might see the great Falls in icy splendor, glistening under the January sun with a beauty more suggestive of Aladdin's palace than of actual reality. Then, in the springtime, he had seen the mighty river pour itself out in a volume, even more wondrous than ever, hastening to the sea with icefloes and streams of melted snow, that it might send them southward to temper the torrid waters. Nor did he omit the early summer, those days of honeymoon tourists, where every nook and rustic seat would be occupied by

"Deluded souls who dream of bliss,"

to quote from a poet who had more snowflakes than red corpuscles in his blood.

Even the autumn, with its sere and yellow leaf and whisperings of the dying year, only invested Niagara with yet richer beauty in his eyes; and in the still, crisp air he would wander from place to place, finding pictures everywhere with which to fill his soul.

As generally understood, Ethan Carlisle was neither a poet nor a dreamer. By standards commonly accepted, he was considered a calm, self-possessed man, eminently practical and definite. Outwardly his life had both strength and repose. His face, though fine, was resolute. There was that in his bearing which inspired confidence. People trusted him. His clients never doubted either his honor or ability.

But while his outward life was seemingly easy and successful, he had burdens and secrets of his own, not sharing them with even his closest friend. Hence there were times when he would pull down the cover of his desk, take his gripsack, and, bidding Mr. Craig good-bye, leave the office for a week, or even longer. He never spoke of these trips, and there was something on his face which forbade the asking of any question.

"What can Craig mean?" he asked himself, after reading the message. The telegram itself was clear enough, but its real intent puzzled Carlisle exceedingly.

Mr. Craig, true to the instincts of his Scottish ancestry, was thrifty when sending telegrams. Anything over the ten-word limit seemed an extravagance.

"Wait for me—will arrive to-night—business of much importance." Mr. Craig had wired enough certainly to detain Mr. Carlisle at the Clifton House, but not enough to give him the faintest inkling of the business suggested. He was certain, though, something unusual had occurred. Mr. Craig would not take this journey for nothing. For him to leave the office with Mr. Carlisle absent, meant serious business of some kind. But what could it be?

With the telegram in his hand, Carlisle mentally ran over the more important cases in which he was engaged; but he could not connect the message with any one of them. He tried a cigar; but, though it smoked bravely enough, still no result was reached. Then he consulted a timetable to see if Mr. Craig's "to-night" meant late or early morning, deciding finally upon a train arriving about ten o'clock. Singularly he never once thought of the place from which Mr. Craig had sent the telegram, but assumed, and naturally, it had come direct from New York.

As the afternoon was pleasant, he concluded to take a stroll over to Clifton, dining while there at a quaint little inn with which he had some acquaintance. He walked leisurely, stopping, every now and then; for his were eyes that saw much of interest in things which many others ignored. The British flag fluttering from a pole over the little custom-house sent his thoughts around the world; for, though a genuine American, Carlisle was an Anglo-Saxon, and gloried in his kinship with the

mightiest empire the world has ever known. A soldier in uniform suggested Waterloo, Cressy, Agincourt, battles in which his forefathers had borne a noble part. Indians with beaded wares and carvings in birch-bark recalled the heroes of Cooper, who had so vividly filled his boyish life. Not far from the railroad station he saw several piles of lumber, one of which offered him a fairly comfortable seat, where he might enjoy his unfinished cigar.

But Mr. Craig's telegram, though it did not exactly trouble him, kept repeating itself, followed up by his own question, What can Craig mean?

Dismissing both as best he could, he watched with much interest a train which had just arrived at the station, evidently an excursion train, judging by the throng of passengers. For a few minutes there was the usual confusion,—some rushing here and there after baggage; groups of half a dozen or more arranging to go together; the ever-present but anxious-looking mother, whose children would insist in scattering all over the platform; the irate father, upon whose nerves traveling has an effect anything but soothing; the consequential citizen, whose airs and bearing would be funny if they were not ridiculous; the city youth let loose from his desk or counter, to whom the occasion means rare hilarity,—all these were here, and many others, crowding, pushing, jostling, talking, laughing, shouting, and everything else of which such miscellaneous companies are capable.

After a time the crowd dispersed, leaving two

young men in earnest conversation. Carlisle was not near enough to distinguish their faces, but something familiar impressed him in their bearing and appearance. One was speaking eagerly, as if trying to convince the other of some matter in dispute. The other listened attentively, but seemed unwilling to be persuaded. Up and down the platform they walked, the one arguing his case with increasing earnestness, but meeting evidently with slight response.

At length they came down the platform steps walking slowly towards the place where Mr. Carlisle was sitting. But they did not see him, for it so happened that in one of the lumber piles several planks jutted out two or three feet, partly because of carelessness in piling and also through difference in length; thus, to speak astronomically, Mr. Carlisle suffered a degree of occultation. Manifestly it was the intent of the young men to escape observation; for they went on the other side of the lumber-piles, coming out by the railroad track. Here they stopped within a few feet of Carlisle, and at once resumed their conversation.

At first Mr. Carlisle intended to move away, having no desire to play the part of unseen listener; but before he could do so, he heard enough to decide his remaining.

"Now, look here, Bob," the one said, "you only played into their hands when you ran away; for that left Uncle Warriston helpless; and so these rascals have robbed him of almost everything. But he did n't mind that; it was the shame and dis-

grace which almost killed him. I saw him a few days ago. He was going with Cousin Eleanor to a little place in the country, and he is just about broken-hearted. I got track of you last week, and came right on; and what I want you to do is to come back with me. The longer you stay away, the worse things get. Do n't give up now, after coming so far."

"Fred, I can't go back!" the other burst out. "I tell you I can't. How can I meet my father? How can I look my sister in the face? I do n't care anything about the law; I wish they would send me to jail. My life is worth nothing to me now. I'm not a coward, Fred; I think you know that. I'd meet that devil Bodell and his whole crowd to-morrow. But when I think of my father and Eleanor it breaks my heart."

The closing words ended in a sob, which shook the stalwart young frame as a ship struck by a heavy sea quivers in every part. For a full minute, perhaps longer, not a word was spoken; then Mr. Carlisle heard:

"Bob, I'm awfully sorry for you—sorrier than I can say. But you gain nothing by keeping away. You are losing—"

"Fred Westerhall, what have I to lose?" the other fiercely interrupted. "There was a time when I had something to lose. I had a name, a home, a future. Now I have nothing," and again the voice broke pitifully.

"Robert Warriston, you have something to lose," the other responded almost as fiercely as his

companion. "You have a father, a sister, a home; you have a name to redeem; you have a future. Bob, you are not yet my age, and if you give up now it will be a burning shame."

"Fred, you do n't understand it, and I pray God you never may! Think it over with me just a minute. Think of my position with Azmon & Grey, the confidence both partners had in me, and the good will of all my associates in the office; then think of my father trusting everything to my honor, which he thought was equal to his own; and then think of my friends, people who believed in me, and were glad to see me in their homes. And now think of me as a felon, a traitor, a dishonored wretch, a worthless, ruined man! O God, how terrible it is!"

This time his voice did not break; for the iron which had entered Robert Warriston's soul seemed to manifest itself in his speech, making it hard and bitter, but utterly hopeless.

Again there was silence; then Mr. Carlisle could hear heavy footsteps, as if the young men were walking to and fro, both too agitated to speak. But soon he heard again:

"Bob, you and I have known each other since we were boys; and you know I would n't advise you to your hurt. But as things now stand, Bodell can say what he pleases without any one to contradict him. Stennett has made charges which we know are utterly false. But what can we do? While you remain away, remember that disgrace attaches to others even more than to yourself."

"To others! What do you mean?"

"Just what I have said, Bob. The innocent sometimes suffer more than the guilty."

"You mean that others are implicated with me?"

"I do."

"But that is false."

"Yes; nevertheless the most cruel lies have been circulated. Even your father has not been spared."

"What! my father mixed up with this vile business; and he one of the purest men God ever made! Surely you are mistaken."

"I wish I were, but I'm not. It's bad enough, Heaven knows, for you; but think of your father's name being bandied about. Because he was willing to pay every note you made, sacrificing his property to do so, people said—at Bodell's suggestion, of course—that you were only his agent, and your running away was part of a scheme to shield him."

"Anything more fiendish could not be imagined. What an infamous scoundrel Bodell is! And what a dupe he made of me! He kept telling me I could make a fortune by a single stroke; but he always said my father was not to know anything of it. For weeks and months he followed me about, pointing out the big chance it was, and the fool I would be to let it slip. One night he came to the house, and, taking me aside, whispered: 'The apple is ripe. If you won't take it to-morrow, another will. But on no account tell your father.'"

The next day I fell into the snare, and, once I was caught, I went on from bad to worse."

Again there was silence, this time longer than before. Neither could Mr. Carlisle hear footsteps, both young men evidently standing still; the one so shocked and stunned as to be incapable of movement; the other silent through intense sympathy.

In the distance could be heard the dull heavy roar of the Falls—a splendid but remorseless torrent, hurling itself over the unyielding rocks, then churning and swirling in the rapids below. Here and there, from the adjoining trees, gloriously luxuriant, and never more so than on this day, birds trilled their afternoon song; for what knew they of Robert Warriston's sin and shame? The sun traveled slowly on, attended by a host of willing clouds, whose edges crimsoned and goldened under the rays of their imperious king.

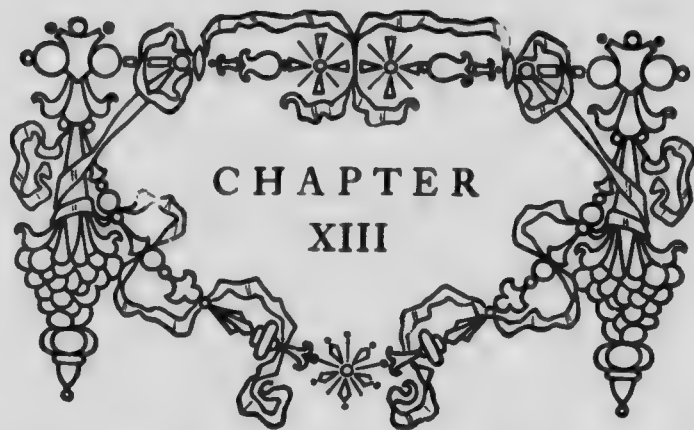
At length Mr. Carlisle heard:

"Bob, I won't ask you to decide now. Suppose we spend the night here. Let us go to the Clifton House, and to-morrow we can talk this matter over again."

Then followed the sound of retreating footsteps, gradually becoming more indistinct, till they were lost in the distance.

When he was certain the young men had gone, Mr. Carlisle resumed his walk, with new and abundant material for reflection. The conversation to which he had just listened started numberless queries in his mind. Then his thoughts went back again to Mr. Craig's telegram. But how strangely

the Warristons were coming into his life! There seemed something like destiny in the way things were shaping themselves. More than ever he was anxious to meet Mr. Craig; so when, some hours later, that canny Scot, or, to be both literal and accurate, that grandson of a canny Scot, stepped from the train, Carlisle was there to give him hearty greeting.



"EMERSON, if he were living now, would not say, 'Hitch your wagon to a star,'" remarked Mr. Carlisle, after reading such accounts of the railroad disaster as Mr. Craig had brought with him.

"Probably not," replied Mr. Craig; "though, for that matter, I do n't know why he ever said it."

"Hobart Craig, the soul of poetry is not in you."

"I'm glad it is n't."

"You lack the fine, delicate appreciation; the artistic temperament; the spiritual exaltation; the —."

"Yes, that is just it, the —, some indescribable, mysterious quality, usually nonsensical to the last degree."

"You are an earth-treader, a clay-tramper, a mud-handler. Your life is only an adobe, a dug-out; you have no wings; your feet are never off the earth."

"Which shows that I am neither a leek nor an

onion, with my head in the ground and my feet in the air."

"There are larger and less odorous vegetables with which you might more truthfully have compared yourself."

"As, for instance, the turnip; a good honest product nevertheless, of more worth to the world than a wagon-load of poetry."

"Let me but write the ballads of a nation."

"I prefer to write its laws."

"The ballads form public sentiment, out of which come noble deeds and heroic characters."

"The laws form public safety, a matter of more importance."

"You put a policeman on the same level with a poet."

"No; I put the poet below the policeman, particularly when the policeman has the poet under arrest as a disturber of the peace."

"Craig, you have no more imagination than a piece of chalk. And to think that I have made a friend and confidant of a mere lump of soulless clay!"

To this Mr. Craig offered no reply other than that given by a half-smile and a twinkle in his blue eyes. Mr. Craig's eyes, by the way, were at least two sizes too small. Not that they were so small in themselves; but, his face being large, round, florid, and set in an imposing framework of highly inflammable whiskers, eyes of the ordinary standard seemed out of proportion. If they had been dark, glittering, of Oriental type, their relative

associations might have been counterbalanced ; but being light-blue, they failed to impress themselves with proper definiteness. And then they were such harmless eyes ! The appealing, childlike, confiding way with which they looked out upon this wicked world was most pathetic. There was something beautifully innocent in them. Judging him by his eyes, a more guileless, simple, unsuspecting man than Mr. Craig could not anywhere be found.

"Emerson would have said, 'Hitch your wagon to a New York newspaper,'" Carlisle went on, holding up a paper of which pages were covered with pictures of the railroad accident. "Here is my picture ; a handsome one, surely. To this noble work of art is appended a brief sketch of my life. This sketch is doubtless intended to stimulate the youthful mind to follow in my illustrious footsteps. Then follow four lines of editorial grief—deep, black, inky tears, which can not be read without emotion."

"Count yourself fortunate in securing even a 'stick' of a newspaper sorrow. Such mourning is expensive. Remember you are no prize-fighter or city alderman. You never robbed a bank, or wrecked a railroad, or looted a corporation. Be reasonable. The papers have treated you generously."

"You call four lines generous?"

"Certainly. If you had eloped with a variety actress, or thrown an inkstand at the head of Judge Duffer, whole columns would have been given you. But such things are exploits. They

take rank among the great deeds of great men, and naturally secure wide recognition."

"You know what sarcasm means?"

"Never heard the word before."

"Some time I will try and explain it."

"De, I am always grateful for your kind instruction."

After a time Carlisle finished his perusal of the papers, and then Mr. Craig outlined his Montana scheme.

"We now control," he said, "though no one knows it but ourselves. Before leaving you told me to look out for the Warriston stock. By a rare chance Dolphin got hold of it the day after you left. Bodell is at Saratoga, where Dolphin is also."

"But why should I go to Montana?" questioned Mr. Carlisle. "The fact that we control is enough."

"Under ordinary circumstances, yes; but at this particular time, no. Mr. Warriston and his friends have put a lot of money into that property. It remains to be seen if the mines are really valuable. I think they are. Some things have come to light since you left New York."

"You mean since the newspapers killed and buried me?"

"Exactly. Yet only for the newspapers I would n't suggest your going to Montana. The Aylesbury crowd will have a man out there before the month is up. With Mr. Warriston out of the way, and you disposed of, an attempt will be made to take possession of the property."

"They surely would n't dream of such a thing."

"They would dream of anything."

"But the property is not theirs."

"But you and the interests you represent are now understood to be out of the way; Aylesbury is sure to make a grab for the whole business. He has picked up a lot of the stock; got it for almost nothing. He thinks Bodell has Warriston's; so give them rope enough. Let us find a couple of men whom we can trust. Take them with you. Remain out there a couple of weeks. Have everything done according to Hoyle, for these fellows are slippery. The first thing is to find the right men."

"I think one can be found without going far," Carlisle said, with more excitement than he had yet shown.

"Who?" questioned Craig, noting the eager look upon the other's face.

"Robert Warriston," answered Carlisle, speaking in a whisper, but with marked emphasis.

"Robert Warriston!" repeated Mr. Craig, incredulously.

"I have seen him within a few hours, and he is now in this hotel," said Carlisle, then hurriedly going over the events of the afternoon, to which Craig listened with deep attention.

"And you say he is in this house?" he asked, when Carlisle had finished his story.

"Their plan was to stop here over night, and I saw them walking this way from the station."

It was now past midnight. Most of the guests

had retired; for the sky was moonless, and the Niagara Falls without either sun or moon is too weird and solemn for ordinary tourists. Had Carlisle been alone he would have remained on the piazza, or sat at the open window in his room listening to the ceaseless roll, that sound of mighty waters which, once heard, can never be forgotten. His sensitive ear would have found variations in the awful tones coming up as from fathomless depths; a cry, a scream, a moan, a sob, and all of infinite degree. No laughter of children, no song of birds, no chiming of bells, no snatch of music,—lovers and joyous maidens might have heard such sounds, but not Ethan Carlisle. People hear and see just what they are themselves. The world outside is but the man enlarged.

"What an everlasting noise!" said Craig, rising from his chair and stretching himself, as a man will who has been traveling all day. Then he went to the hotel office, chatting pleasantly with the night clerk, meanwhile turning over with seeming carelessness the pages of the register. In the most casual way he inquired concerning floors and stairways, giving the clerk to understand that he was nervous with regard to hotel fires.

Never were Mr. Craig's eyes more innocent-looking, and never did his face seem more free from guile than when he was speaking to the clerk. After his tender, confiding interview, he returned to the piazza, where Carlisle was still sitting, enjoying the weird glory of the night. Craig remained but a few minutes, saying he was tired

and would go to his room. And this he did, but not to rest; for he soon came out again, having exchanged his shoes for a pair of slippers, and his coat for a light summer jacket. Thus arrayed, he walked softly along the corridor, following the directions of the clerk; but instead of making his way to a fire-escape or staircase, he was looking for Robert Warriston's room.

Mr. Craig never waited for things to turn up. His habit was to turn things up himself, and quite frequently to turn them down. When the iron was not ready for him to strike, he worked the bellows blowing the fire. Carlisle said truly, Craig had no wings, and his feet were never off the earth; but his were lively feet, and served him better than wings.

Observing by the transom window that a light was burning in Warriston's room, he knocked on the door, which Robert immediately opened, and stepped back in amazement when he saw Mr. Craig.

"How are you, Robert? I'm glad to see you," Mr. Craig said, entering the room, and holding out his hand in the most cordial way.

Robert took the proffered hand gratefully, though he said nothing.

"Surprised to see me? Well, I do n't wonder. I'm surprised myself. Had n't any idea you were here until Mr. Carlisle told me less than half an hour since."

"Is Mr. Carlisle here?" Robert managed to say.

His face was now very pale, the flush caused by Mr. Craig's sudden appearance having died

away, leaving a pallor almost deathly. Then Craig's mention of Carlisle sent a chill to his heart for Carlisle was almost the last person he wished to meet. He remembered how earnestly he had warned him against Bodell, and on no account to trust him in any way.

"Sit down, Bob. I want to talk with you," Craig said in his matter-of-fact way.

Though he saw how agitated young Warriston was, he pretended not to notice it, busying himself by bringing a chair from the window, and sitting down as if he intended to remain some time. He also observed that Robert had made no preparations for retiring, and that his bag was packed, suggesting to Mr. Craig that Robert meant, if possible, to slip off quietly during the night. There were few things in that room, or on Robert Warriston's face, his child-like, blue eyes did not see; but he made no allusion to any one of them. The number of things Mr. Craig left unsaid were more than the sands of the seashore in multitude. Nevertheless he remained with Robert Warriston fully two hours, and talked rapidly most of the time.

"Then you will go?" he said, finally, rising from his chair and moving towards the door.

"Go!" exclaimed Robert. "I would be glad to walk there, stay there for a year, or even ten if necessary. How can I thank you and Mr. Carlisle for this proof of your confidence?"

Mr. Craig may not have been a poet; nor could his warmest admirer say he had either the genius

of an artist or the soul of a musician; and perhaps his cheeks did suggest bannocks, and his whiskers approach dangerously close to the line of fiery red. But Mr. Craig was a man, and, in opening a way for Robert Warriston's return to a life of sturdy honesty and independence, he was saving a soul from death and hiding a multitude of sins.

Next morning, when Mr. Carlisle came down to breakfast, he found Mr. Craig in earnest conversation with Fred Westerhall and Robert Warriston. This did not surprise him; indeed he rather expected it. With exquisite courtesy he greeted Warriston, who had dreaded this meeting. He was also most cordial with Westerhall, much to that young man's pleasure, for he had always stood somewhat in awe of Carlisle. Later on, when matters were being adjusted, he invited Westerhall to go with him to Montana, an invitation which was eagerly accepted.

About noon they left for Buffalo, where several busy hours were spent, Mr. Craig making all the arrangements for the journey, the others fully occupied with substantial changes in both apparel and appearance.

"Good-bye, Craig," Carlisle said, as the train slowly moved out from the station.

"Good-bye, Mr. Carlisle," Craig replied; then, as the train moved along, he walked with it almost to the end of the depot, finally calling out to Carlisle, who stood on the car platform:

"Remember the slippery fellows you have to deal with."



IN Ridgeburg, mail matters were so arranged that the postmaster was rarely seriously embarrassed. Just once a day the big leather pouch made its appearance, a duty for which Tom Lang was held responsible. In itself this mail contract was not alarmingly profitable; but by a combination of interests, Tom Lang managed to pay his way and have something over. He constituted himself general carrier of parcels and sundry forms of merchandise, and also so arranged his wagon that, when required, it answered for a stage-coach.

Every afternoon at a few minutes before the appointed hour, Mr. Lang drove up to Tibbetts's grocery-store, and after seeing to his horse—sometimes he used two—would go into the store, waiting there while Mr. Tibbetts collected and postmarked the mail. As a usual thing this duty on the part of Mr. Tibbetts was not exacting; for Ridgeburg did not carry on an extensive correspondence, its principal mail being weekly newspapers, varied with a few letters at irregular inter-

vals. During the summer this burden somewhat increased, as Tremaine and the few other visitors received letters nearly every day.

"You're going round by Squire Bodell's," Mr. Tibbetts said to Tom, soon after he had returned from Foxvale with the mail, "and I wish you'd take him some letters. One of them came three or four days ago. Nat Sykes does n't come regular now."

"Squire ain't very well these days," Tom answered, moving down the store to the pigeon-hole arrangement where Mr. Tibbetts was distributing the mail which had just come in.

"I should say not," replied Mr. Tibbetts, without pausing in his work; for there were nearly a score of letters to be pigeon-holed, a large number for Ridgeburg.

"How the Squire has changed!" Tom said, reaching for the letters which Mr. Tibbetts held out to him. "I remember Squire Bodell when his hair was black as a crow, and himself as straight as a gun-barrel. Now he's grayer than a badger and all doubled up."

"Squire's had a hard time," Mr. Tibbetts responded with a fair measure of sympathy; for his exhausting labors with the letters were over, and nothing remained but a batch of newspapers.

"When I was a boy I kind of envied him living in that big house and having all the money he wanted, but I gave up that a good while ago," Tom said in his drawling way, looking raptly at the letters in his hand.

"You remember when he got married?" Mr. Tibbetts asked, putting the last newspaper in its place, and then leaning on the counter, a favorite attitude of his.

"Very well. And a prettier woman than his wife, when she first came to Ridgeburg, I never saw. Her eyes were black as a sloe, and so was her hair, and her face looked as if 't was cut out of marble."

"Yes; but beauty in a woman is n't everything, and specially that kind of beauty. It means temper, Tom, and mostly bad temper."

"That may be," Tom drawled out even more slowly than usual. "Still it's sort of pleasant to look at. I think that a good-looking woman has a better show of being good herself than one who is n't so well favored."

"Beauty is only skin-deep, Tom."

"Yes; but that's as far as most of us can see."

"Squire's wife made a lasting impression on you, Tom."

"She did, and I do n't deny it."

"She never liked Ridgeburg."

"I won't say that."

"Well, she never was contented here."

"That's true."

"And she might have been if she had tried."

"Well, Mr. Tibbetts, I'm nigh on to sixty years of age, and my experience is that most people do n't know much about being contented. The only difference is that some talk about it more than others."

"Mr. Tremaine said something like that last Sunday."

"Yes. I was there. I would n't miss going for a good deal. It's worth a quarter to see Deacon Tompkins and Josh Higgins."

As Mr. Lang said this he gave a loving tug to his chin whiskers, a gesture which afforded outlet to certain emotions.

Mr. Tibbetts made no reply. Deacon Tompkins and Josh Higgins traded occasionally with him; hence he allowed Tom Lang's remark to lose itself among the empty boxes which adorned the upper shelves of his store.

"I wonder if Squire ever hears from James," Tom said, looking at one of the letters in his hand postmarked New York.

"I'm sure I don't know," Mr. Tibbetts replied, taking the letter from Tom and examining it critically.

"Perhaps the Warriston people have met him," Tom suggested, watching Mr. Tibbetts turn the letter over in his hand, then run his fingers along the envelope as if, like a bee on a flower, he would thus absorb the contents.

"That reminds me there is quite a lot of mail for the Warristons," Mr. Tibbetts said, giving Tom Lang the letter and going back to the pigeon holes.

"I can take their mail along with the Squire's, if you wish," Tom said, "though I guess Miss Warriston comes for it 'most every day."

"Yes, just about this time," Mr. Tibbetts re-

plied, looking at the clock, a round-faced, square-framed affair, with dial figures so arranged as to express the superior virtues of a certain soap.

"I guess I'll ask her about James Bodell," Tom said, sitting down upon a sugar-barrel which he had rolled in after bringing the mail.

"Well, I do n't know," Mr. Tibbetts remarked, cautiously.

Mr. Tibbetts had a fair measure of curiosity. Speaking generously, his was an inquiring mind; and this not only for the sake of the information in itself, but chiefly because of its value to his store. A little item of personal gossip answered all the purposes of an advertisement, besides being so much cheaper, a matter Mr. Tibbetts rarely for-

When Dan Spencer got hurt at Foxvale (Tom Lang was waiting for his mail at the time, and saw Dan dragged out from between two freight-cars), Mr. Tibbetts had a big run of trade that night and for more than a week after. When Sarah Pratt, a mature maiden of homely visage, took the stage one afternoon "without saying nothing to nobody," to use Tom Lang's exact phrase, and at Foxvale met Martin Coote, to whom she was married before sundown, all the women of Ridgeburg had purchases to make that evening in Tibbetts's store. An item of news concerning the Warristons would mean much to Mr. Tibbetts, for Ridgeburg was really curious about the new tenants of the Libby cottage. And yet Mr. Tibbetts was unwilling to have anything said to Miss Warriston which would associate her with James

Bodell. Had he known anything of astronomy, it might have occurred to him that planets can belong to the same system and yet move in orbits entirely distinct. But Mr. Tibbetts, unfortunately, knew little about the stars. He had spent so much time in scraping sugar-barrels and molasses-casks that his knowledge of the heavens was exceedingly limited.

"Good evening, Miss Warriston. What a beautiful day we've had! Some mail for you," and Mr. Tibbetts stepped briskly in the direction of the pigeon-holes, returning with the letters, which he gave her.

Miss Warriston was already a favorite in Ridgeburg. Her evident devotion to her father, and her easy, simple, yet gracious ways had removed much of the suspicion with which strangers are usually regarded in country villages.

In a gown of simple gray, broken here and there with dainty trimming; with a broad-brimmed hat, almost guiltless of adornment, but strangely becoming, making her face even more winsome and attractive; with a natty parasol, whose crooked handle hung upon her wrist, she presented a figure which Tom Lang, sixty-year-old bachelor that he was, could not but admire.

Having a few purchases to make, Miss Warriston waited while Mr. Tibbetts gave some young people their mail, who went out soon after, leaving her the only customer then in the store. This gave Tom Lang the opportunity he desired; so rising from the sugar-barrel, and tipping his hat

after a fashion not yet the vogue in Continental courts, he said:

"Begging your pardon, Miss Warriston, but do you know any one in New York by the name of Bodell?"

Instantly Miss Warriston's face changed. At first she flushed, then paled, her features becoming like gray marble. A light leaped into her eyes as from the gleam of a hidden fire. Fortunately Mr. Tibbetts was at the other end of the store, getting some things which she had ordered. With that tact and presence of mind natural to most women, she excused herself to Tom, and went to see the articles Mr. Tibbetts had put on the counter. After a word or two with him she returned to Tom. "You asked me about some New York people, Mr. Lang. What name did you say?"

"Bodell—James Bodell, whose father lives in that big house you can see from the Libby cottage."

"I did know a person of that name," Miss Warriston said; "at least," correcting herself, "my father had some business acquaintance with him."

"I'll be bound Mr. Warriston found it an expensive acquaintance. James Bodell would take the wings off an archangel if he got the chance."

"Women are not supposed to know much about business matters," Miss Warriston replied, with a hothouse smile, though her face was very pale.

"Every one who deals with James Bodell will know it, whether men or women. We know him here in Ridgeburg," Tom said.

"And you say his father—provided we are speaking of the same person—lives in what is known as the Red House?"

Eleanor was now as calm and self-possessed as when she entered the store. Tom Lang evidently had no ulterior motive in asking about Bodell. Like most of the Ridgeburg people, he thought all New Yorkers were acquainted with each other. His question, therefore, was only a random one.

Tom started in to describe Bodell; but Miss Warriston excused herself, saying she had left her father alone. Though satisfied that Tom Lang was prompted by mere curiosity, Eleanor Warriston could not but experience a vague sense of uneasiness, particularly when she recalled the evening on the lake when Stephen Derwent had spoken of Bodell. Still there was the hope that the name was only a coincidence.

"Would n't surprise me a bit if James Bodell had got the best of it with Mr. Warriston. She seemed sort of frightened when I first mentioned his name," Tom said, moving to the door, from which he watched Miss Warriston go down the road.

"Just like him if he did," answered Mr. Tibbetts, gathering up the packages which comprised Miss Warriston's order, and putting them in a basket for his boy to take to the Libby cottage.

"Them Warristons are nice folks," Tom remarked, coming back from the door and resuming his seat on the sugar-barrel.

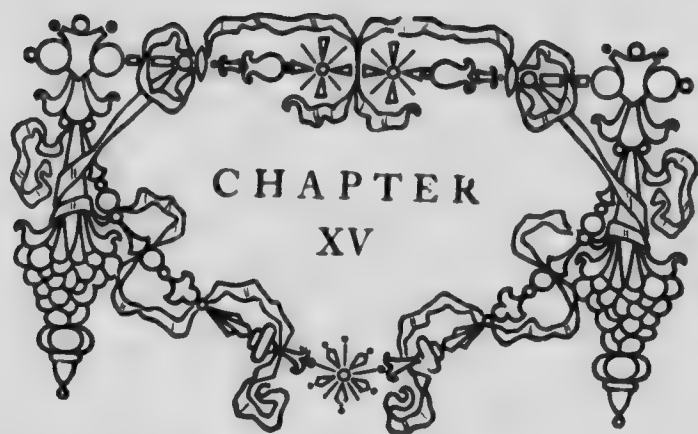
"That they are," returned Mr. Tibbetts, who

had now gone behind the counter and was dusting out the scales preparatory to weighing some things which were going to the Derwents.

"I'll take these letters round to the Squire," Tom said after a pause, rising from the sugar-barrel as he spoke. "If I see the Squire I'll mention the Warristons. He likes to know what is going on in the village."

"I do n't think I'd say anything of their having met James," Mr. Tibbetts replied, reaching for the little ball of twine that he might tie up the parcels he had weighed.

"You're right there," answered Tom, who was now at the door. "The Squire had better find that out for himself."



AUSTIN TREMAINE had put a good deal into his Ridgeburg vacation, which is only another way of saying he had taken a great deal out of it. It must be admitted, however, that there were those in Ridgeburg who looked forward hopefully to his departure; for he had great'y distressed some pious souls during these summer months. Deacon Tompkins was of this number.

The Deacon will never forget one Saturday afternoon when the Ridgeburg and Foxvale baseball teams met to decide the county championship. A bitter rivalry existed between these teams, which increased as the summer went on. A big crowd, therefore, gathered to witness the deciding game, all Ridgeburg turning out in force, while Foxvale sent a large contingent of enthusiastic admirers. Austin Tremaine went early to the ball-field that afternoon with Ruth Derwent, and, having found a desirable place for Ruth's camp-chair, she sat down with such dignity as inheres in a school-teacher, leaving him to enjoy a sprawl on the grass.

Let it be here remarked, though in a stage whisper—a mysterious complication of sound, which can be heard by every one in the theater except certain people behind the footlights—that Mr. Tremaine was finding Ruth Derwent's companionship exceedingly pleasant, a matter which did not escape the notice of many Ridgeburgians. To say that Ruth was entirely unconscious of certain nods and smiles when she appeared with Tremaine that afternoon, would not be an exact statement of the facts in the case. She may not have intended it, still there was something in her walk, in the delicate flush on her cheek, in a glad light in her eye, and in a certain expression on her face, which gave evidence that she both understood and enjoyed the situation. That Tremaine also enjoyed it was equally manifest, though he did not show it in the same way. And he had good reason to enjoy it; for a daintier, sweeter picture of pure, sweet womanhood it would be difficult to find than that same Ruth Derwent, as in a simple white dress, with gloves, hat, and parasol to match, she walked with him across the ball-field.

"We are short-handed to-day," Ned Marshall said, in response to a question of Tremaine.

"Who is absent?" Tremaine inquired.

"Leighton," Marshall replied, with evident anxiety in his voice.

"Dick, the pitcher?" said Tremaine, now rising from the grass, where he had been lolling so contentedly.

"Yes; and we've no one to take his place ex-

cept Alec Scott. Alec is all right, but he can't pitch well enough for a game like this. I'm afraid we're goners," Marshall said, swinging his bat in a disconsolate way.

Ned Marshall was captain of the Ridgeburg team, and was a bright, spunky little fellow.

"Who pitches for Foxvale?" Tremaine asked, taking the ball from Marshall's hand, and twisting his fingers around it as pitchers are wont to do.

"Hawley, a college man who is stopping at the Kenwood. They had him last time we played, and our fellows got scared in the first inning."

Something in that ball appealed strangely to Tremaine. He kept rolling it between his hands while Marshall was speaking, reaching his fingers from one seam to another, finally gathering it up in a way known only to the initiated. College memories came in upon him. He thought of the field where many hard battles had been fought. He had often pitched, the most critical games usually being given him. Surely his right arm had not lost its skill. This was the end of his vacation, and if he would serve Ridgeburg, now was the time. No particular changes were necessary in his costume, for he had on a golfing suit, his shoes were fairly stout, and with the exchange of a cap for his soft hat, he would be in good playing gear.

"Let me try an inning or two," he said to Marshall. "I am out of practice, but I may get into it later on."

When Tremaine appeared as pitcher for the Ridgeburgs, a great shout went up, which he ac-

knowledgeed good-humoredly. Then began the greatest game of ball ever seen in Ridgeburg, the memory of which remaineth even to this day. At first Tremaine was unsteady, his arm not responding to his eye, so the Foxvales made sad headway despite Marshall and his gallant company. But later on he settled down, striking men out in short order. Meantime the Ridgeburgs had been adding to their score. Hawley did nobly, but, with two men on bases, Tremaine hit the ball such a terrific blow that it not only brought in the two men who seemed likely to get no farther, but meant a home run for himself. How Ridgeburg cheered as the low-legged young clergyman went tearing around the bases, finally sliding almost twenty feet and reaching the home plate in safety! Big milk-cans were rattled. Cowbells were rung. Dinner-horns were blown. The boys yelled themselves hoarse. The girls waved their handkerchiefs. It is said Ruth Derwent tried to stand on her camp-chair and wave her parasol. But this can not be vouched for. Anyhow, when Mr. Tremaine came up out of the dust, no Alexander was ever greeted with more enthusiasm. He was capless; his golf-trousers had lost a knee; his right arm was bare clear to the shoulder, and all red and scratched as the result of his slide; he was covered with dust from head to foot; he walked as though a knot had been tied in one of his legs; but these were trifles compared with the glory of the hour. He had saved Ridgeburg. He had vanquished the elusive Hawley. The momentous question of the

championship had been decided by his skill. Tattered and torn, bruised and dusty, he bowed to the deafening applause which came from the assembled throng.

Just at that moment Deacon Tompkins came down the road. The pious Deacon classed baseball with the abominations of Babylon, never under any circumstances giving sanction or favor to such wickedness. And now here was Tremaine looking like a lunatic, surrounded by a crowd of lunatics, each one more demented than the other. This was too much for the Deacon, so turning hastily away he started for home.

There was just the slightest tinge of September on that Sunday morning when Mr. Tremaine started for the meeting-house. It lacked a full hour of service-time; but Tremaine was in no mood for fast walking, preferring to loiter and dream by the way. Though reminded almost every step of his performance of the preceding day, he was neither as stiff nor as lame as he had expected. The wondrous stillness of Ridgeburg deeply impressed him; more so this morning than ever before. The clear, vast sky, broken here and there with little sunshot clouds, seemed to bend low over the hills, revealing yet hiding the infinite. The lakes in the fresh morning light, unruffled by even a ripple, mirrored the skies in their crystal deeps, causing the road upon which he was walking to appear as a boundary-line between the upper and the lower heavens. The trees had not lost

anything of their foliage, save such restless ungrateful leaves as gave themselves to the caprice of the harvest wind. But those that remained more than atoned for the easily-tempted fly-aways; for between each tree and its leaves there seemed to exist a holy affection, calm and beautiful.

To a keen, sensitive ear, one which listened for other things than sound, the birds may not have been so joyous as when early summer filled their throats with thanksgiving; but the song was deeper, its notes were richer and of fuller tone, as though gratitude and hope had blended in the strain.

Most of the early flowers had gone, those dainty, exquisite, but simple doorways through which the young summer came tripping in sheen of golden light; but other flowers had come, with more vivid color, deeper hue, of ampler form, enriching the summer as it passed away.

A serious, earnest look was on Austin Tremaine's face that Sunday morning. People whose thinkings never reached below the cuticle, had a notion that Tremaine was disposed to look upon life in an easy, if not frivolous way. Because he carried a frank, pleasant face, could speak without whine or snivel, had a supreme contempt for all forms of cant, gave greetings that were hearty and cordial, insisted upon seeing the best in every one, and entered joyously into the life that surrounded him, he was misjudged and often most severely. Few men of his years were more serious at heart than Austin Tremaine. At times he was

well-nigh overwhelmed by the woe and the mystery of life. The burdens under which so many were staggering; the sorrows which dare not express themselves in words; the agonies of disappointment amid which multitudes writhed helplessly; the troubles in whose presence even death is hardly felt; the pain, the poverty, the weakness, the sullen despair, the brooding discontent,—all these came upon him with such force that there were hours when he would cast himself upon the floor of his room, and, after the manner of a mediæval monk, spend the whole night in soul-anguish. But on the morrow no one would suspect him of monkish devotions or midnight vigils; for there was the same genial smile, the same cordial greeting, the same pleasant word. Hence most people had the impression that his life knew nothing of burden or pain.

And this was just the impression he desired to convey. His hours of spiritual struggle, when he tried to break through his prison-house of clay and escape from the bondage of mystery, when he reached out entreating hands into the enfolding darkness, fearful of giving way to utter despair,—these seasons of conflict he held as secrets not to be profaned by sharing them with others.

Standing on the bridge—for he had reached the place where two of the lakes were united by a canal of primitive construction then bridged in an equally primitive way—Tremaine waited several minutes, looking thoughtfully, first in one direction, and then in another.

"Say, Mister Tremaine, Squire Bodell wants to know if you can come up this afternoon. He's real sick an' would like to see you."

Turning about at hearing his name spoken, Tremaine saw Nat Sykes, Squire Bodell's general man, and only man, for that matter.

"Is the Squire very sick?" Tremaine inquired, surprised at receiving this message.

"He's pretty bad," Nat replied; "has bad spells 'most every day, an' they last longer 'han they used to, an' come of'ner."

Arranging with Sykes for an hour when he would call, Tremaine resumed his walk to the little meeting-house.

The bell, which on week-days clanged with a harsh, angry sound—at least it seemed so to the Ridgeburg children—had now the sweet, tremulous tones of a saint; and the bell's pious invitation was being generously accepted, almost every seat being occupied. Children were gathered upon their mothers' laps; sturdy boys were taken on their fathers' knees. Benches were carried in and placed in the aisles. Some people had brought camp-chairs, which they set wherever there was room. The air being balmy and still, the windows were raised to the top, that people outside, in buggies, wagons, carry-alls, could hear, and in some cases see, all that was going on.

Of course, Deacon Tompkins had a front seat. His pious face was yet clouded with the thought of yesterday's unholy spectacle on the ball-field, but the clouds were silver-lined with the comfort-

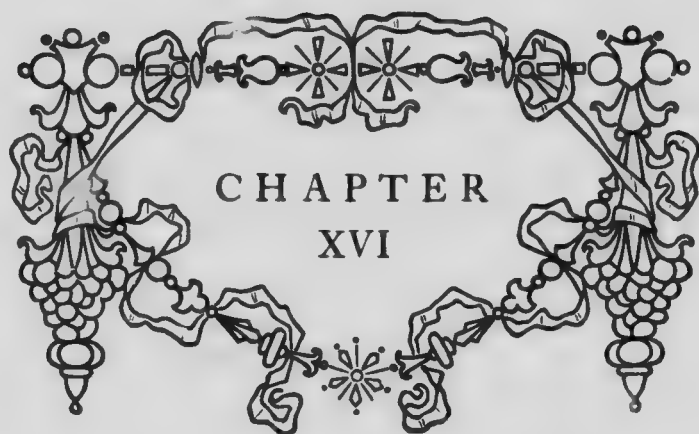
ing assurance that this was the closing service of Tremaine's Ridgeburg ministry.

Josiah Higgins also had a front seat, not out of regard to Mr. Tremaine, but that he might stand guard over such remnants of the faith, and such ashes of the fathers as yet remained.

The sermon closed the "Adam and Eve" series, Mr. Tremaine dealing principally with the life of the fallen man and woman after leaving Eden. He spoke of Cain murdering Abel; of Adam digging a grave for his own son; of sin as a Brocken Specter, throwing shadows of almost infinite proportions; closing with the thought that, among the mysteries of life, no one is deeper than that of the innocent having to suffer even more terribly than the guilty.

Ridgeburg lingered after the service to bid Mr. Tremaine good-bye; for almost every one in the meeting-house, as well as those outside, insisted upon shaking hands with him, and saying all manner of pleasant things. As he was to spend the afternoon with the Derwents, Abram and his wife went on, though Ruth lingered for a time, but finally left with Eleanor Warriston.

Deacon Tompkins and Josiah Higgins were the last to quit the meeting-house; but this was not because of their reluctance to part from Tremaine, but it so happened that this was Deacon Tompkins's Sunday to lock up the building, a service which, by being taken in turn, saved the expense of a sexton. Never did the Deacon more cheerfully turn the key in the lock than on this Sunday.



AT the time appointed, Tremaine presented himself at Squire Bodell's. A sharp, striking contrast the two men suggested as they met that Sunday afternoon,—Tremaine young, strong, alert, vigorous in every movement, with a hand full of eager blood, eyes flashing in the light of health, and a voice without a break or false note; the Squire almost helpless in his chair, his face as bloodless as ashes, his hands wasted and trembling, and his voice so uncertain that at one moment it would break into a heavy sob, and at another die in a whisper. Their greetings were simple; but when men are on the border-land between time and eternity they are too serious for effusive ceremony.

"You may go now, Sykes," the Squire said to Nat, who had come up with Tremaine. "I shall not want you for the rest of the afternoon."

"Had n't I better stay?" Sykes inquired in a tone meant to be sympathetic. "There's your medicine to measure, an' you may want me for other things."

As he spoke, Sykes moved over to the big chair in which the Squire reclined, busying himself with making the sick man more comfortable.

"Thank you," the Squire said; "but you need n't remain. Put the medicine on this table. Anything else can wait till you get back."

After Sykes had gone, the Squire turned to Tremaine and said:

"Your name, I understand, is Tremaine?"

"It is," was the answer, given in a quiet, respectful tone.

"You are a clergyman?"

"I am."

"Well, Mr. Tremaine, though I am not a religious man—in fact, I never believed very much in religion—yet perhaps you can help me."

The Squire paused through sheer exhaustion; then, as if resolved not to give way, he continued:

"I have a story to tell, not a long one, but to me a painful one, to which, if you will kindly listen, I shall be grateful."

Again another pause, Squire Bodell evidently struggling with memories which distressed him.

"I was born in this house, the only child, and at my father's death came into possession of what was regarded as a handsome property. While my mother lived"—here the Squire's lips trembled, but speedily controlling himself, he went on—"I had an easy, happy life, for she was as good a mother as young man ever had. After her death"—another silence, broken only by the solemn tick of an old-fashioned eight-day clock which

stood in the corner of the room, the swing of whose pendulum was a homily in itself—"I went to New York."

Here the Squire took some of the medicine which Sykes had arranged to his hand; a stimulant largely, for his day of restoratives had long since gone.

"While there I met a Miss Ruthven. I thought she was"—and again the big pendulum swung to and fro in its heavy case, more solemn and impressive with each beat—"all that I needed to make glad my life. She was young, not quite twenty, and in my eyes very beautiful. I spent most of that winter in New York, and in the spring Amy Ruthven came here as my wife. At first she appeared quite happy and contented, but after a time the quiet life of this place began to worry her. Poor thing!" and again the Squire closed his eyes, at the same time leaning back heavily in his chair as though unable to proceed.

Tremaine could only wait in silence for the Squire to resume his story, no opportunity yet presenting itself for either counsel or comfort.

"When our boys came, having them for company, I thought she would be satisfied; but she pined for the city and her friends there. Perhaps if I had gone into some kind of public life it might have been better, for she was fond of excitement and society, while I was just the other way. I tried to make the best of it, for I loved her with all my heart; aye, and I love her now!"

These last words were spoken with such pas-

sion that Tremaine looked at the Squire in amazement; for he was now sitting almost upright in his chair, his eyes full of light, and a look on his face which fairly transfigured it.

"Yes, I love her now; and I will always love her, not only in this world, but in the world to come!"

But such unnatural excitement brought its inevitable reaction. A dying man may have the spirit of a giant, but not even the strength of a little child. So again there was a pause, this time longer than before.

"And so the years went on," the Squire continued, his voice now weak and uncertain, "the boys, James and John, growing up meanwhile. James was masterful, determined; and, being the elder, exercised a strong influence upon his brother. Of course the boys quarreled and had their little differences, as boys will; but my wife always sided with James, no matter how much he was at fault. This made him selfish and overbearing, and I often had to interfere."

For the second time the Squire had recourse to his medicine, after which he proceeded:

"One day there were high words between the boys; but towards evening they seemed all right again, and went down to the lake where they kept their boat. But I never saw John again."

"What happened?" Tremaine exclaimed rather than asked, so deeply was he moved by the Squire's story.

"I do n't know," was the reply, given in a low,

muffled voice. "They told me the boys got into their boat, went out only a little distance, when, in some way, the boat capsized, and John was drowned."

"What a terrible accident!" Tremaine was saying, when the Squire broke in:

"An accident it surely was. The lads were both high-spirited, and perhaps in the boat continued their quarrel of the morning; but some people think that James willfully—"

Squire Bodell could not put into the words the fearful suspicions which had been aroused at that time.

Ridgeburg vividly remembered those terrible days. When the people learned that Jack Bodell had been drowned, their grief was profound. Every one loved Jack. Bright-faced, glad-hearted, a brave, kindly lad, he was a general favorite. And when it began to be whispered that James was with him in the boat, and that they had been heard angrily disputing just before the accident, popular grief took on an element of deep anger. Out of regard for the Squire, these angry mutterings were suppressed, but in time some of them reached Mrs. Bodell.

This was the last drop in her cup. She turned upon Ridgeburg with unrelenting hatred. Nothing would induce her to have even the most formal relations with the villagers. She declined all calls of condolence, refusing to see any one. The Squire remonstrated, entreated, but to no purpose. Her love for the dead boy, instead of being a holy

memory, became a black shadow which fell upon the life of his brother. Her love for her husband, never a noble or exalted passion, ceased to have its rightful place, and for the time she numbered him among the accusers of her son. A hard, bitter look came upon her face; sharp, unkindly words were ever on her tongue. No ray of joy entered her home. She was morbid, suspicious, and at times a prey to such strange fancies as to be almost beyond control. The only person for whom she seemed to have any affection was her son James, and upon him she lavished a jealous, intense, but reckless love, refusing him nothing, no matter what his demands or exactions were.

Thus the years went on, and at forty Amy Bodell was worn out and ready to die. But death does not come even when we long for it; neither can broken hearts always find refuge in the tomb. One day she left Ridgeburg, taking James with her, the Squire being in Albany at the time. She did not return, announcing in a letter to the Squire her purpose of making a home with her son. Having some means of her own, the Squire being also generous, she was able to gratify many of James's selfish, extravagant habits, though the more she gave, the more he imperiously demanded. This, instead of weakening her love, only added to it, so that her passion for him became a positive idolatry.

Soon after he came of age, at his urgent request, she allowed him some control of her property, which in a short time he shamefully abused, finally going out West somewhere and leaving her absolutely

destitute. Being proud, high-spirited, conscious now that she had wronged her husband, she could not bring herself to ask his help in this extremity. Neither could she believe that James meant to desert her. But the weeks wore away, months even came and went, still there was no word or sign. Then followed days of utter poverty, when she hungered for bread, when she shivered with cold, when she wandered homeless in the streets. But so intense was her pride that she resolved to die rather than let her condition be known. One night she crept down to the edge of the river, and in despair took the leap which many a broken heart has taken. But the city, which will let people die of hunger, will not let them die of despair. So she was rescued, and taken to a near-by hospital; for it was seen her condition was truly pitiable. Frenzied with fever, she called loudly for her husband, and with the mad strength of delirium insisted that the nurses and doctors were keeping him from her. Then she would go back to the lover days, using the sweet, endearing names of that early winter when her girlhood troth was plighted. Sometimes she spoke with such wistfulness and tenderness that the ward doctor or hospital nurse had difficulty to keep back their own tears.

As she had often spoken the name of Bodell, and mentioning Ridgeburg as well, a message was sent them. The Squire, though confident that there was a mistake, answered the message in person. But when he saw her! O how pitiful and

terrible it all was! She recovered consciousness an hour or so before she died, and when the end came her hand was in his, her wasted face was drawn lovingly against his breast, and with a smile as sweet as when she came a bride to Ridgeburg, she gently passed away. With the poor, emaciated body, Squire Bodell returned home, giving it holy burial beside the golden-haired Jack, whose grave Ridgeburg held in such deep remembrance.

Recovering himself after a time, Squire Bodell resumed his story, all of which need not be given here.

"For years after my son went West I heard nothing of him whatever. Knowing how reckless men are in mining countries, I thought it likely he had been killed in some brawl. But he is in New York, and has been there some time. A few days since I had a letter from him, and it is concerning that letter I wish your advice."

"I am grateful for your confidence," Tremaine answered, "and will gladly render you any assistance I can. Of that you may be certain."

"Then, tell me what reply I am to make to this letter."

Here the Squire handed the letter to Tremaine, who took it and read it carefully.

"Now, Mr. Tremaine," the Squire said, "I am an old man. But a few weeks or months of life remain to me. God knows I never meant harm to any one. But my boy was drowned down here in the lake. My wife died in a New York hospital. My home has been ruined. And must I send for

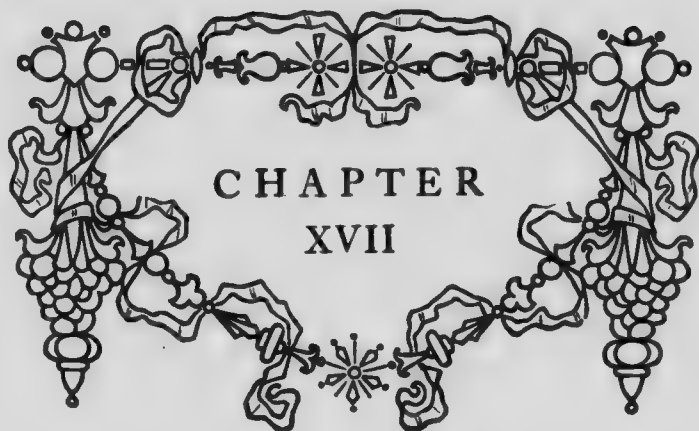
the one who has caused all this sorrow? And must I forgive him?"

The Squire's voice was now almost inaudible. For some time he had spoken in a whisper, stopping frequently to reserve his declining strength.

Tremaine hardly knew what reply to make. The Squire's question embarrassed him. He knew, of course, the general idea of forgiveness. But with that idea he had little sympathy. To forgive a man before he honestly asked it seemed like putting a premium upon sin. Tremaine's notion was that a wrongdoer should either be punished for his wrong or make ample reparation. The cheap way in which some people made atonement, to him was worse than a fraudulent bankruptcy. A display of crocodile tears and a flow of hollow phrases were poor compensation for years of cruel injury. But Tremaine knew something of Divine forgiveness. Oftentimes he could hear in his soul the pathetic cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" And he could see that, even under his anger and bitterness, Squire Bodell yet cherished an affection for his wayward son, and desired to see him. Better, then, err on the side of mercy. In point of simple justice, James Bodell had no claim. But life is short. Sins which are sealed in death can never be expiated. The hands of the dead are terrible in their grasp. Once their bony fingers clutch the throat of the living, nothing can ever relax their hold. Enmities and strifes, Tremaine thought, should never be carried to the grave; for this makes a cemetery of the heart,

through which shrouded, ghastly forms are ever walking. So he advised the Squire in the spirit of that Master whom he tried to serve ; then, kneeling down beside the big chair, he offered a simple, tender prayer.

Promising to call again, if possible, before he left Ridgeburg, Mr. Tremaine went out, and the Squire, leaning back quietly in his chair, fell into a peaceful sleep.



JACOB AYLESBURY, of whom Mr. Bodell had certain things to say when writing from Saratoga, lived in a world habited by just two persons, Mr. Aylesbury and himself. No man in New York was more unembarrassed or unrestricted in the study of his own interests, or more generous in the consideration of his own welfare.

When about thirty years of age, before he had fully mastered the science of self-appreciation, he met a bright and fairly attractive young woman, to whom he offered himself with such worldly goods as he then possessed. This young woman, having the romantic zeal peculiar to her sex, entered upon the holy estate of matrimony with certain lofty ideals, her enthusiasm even going so far as to invest Mr. Aylesbury with attributes of a high order. But after a time she discovered that her idol was not made of either Parian marble or Egyptian alabaster, but of coarse, common clay. Had the clay been native earth, a soil from which flowers might come or fruit be gathered, Mrs.

Aylesbury perhaps would have recovered from the shock; but it was only fit for brick to be used in the building of Mr. Aylesbury's fortune. When their daughter Geneva was born, Mrs. Aylesbury hoped that the new life now in their home would bring about some change in her husband. But chubby fingers can't do much with dense, hard clay. When a man's heart is only a brickyard, a cradle is of less value than a wheelbarrow.

Then Mrs. Aylesbury began taking in her ideals, stripping the masts bare, until finally the ship of hope with which she had started so bravely on her voyage could not even make steerage way. It then drifted an aimless, useless thing, and, being caught in the fierce arms of a tempest, was flung upon the rocks and became a total wreck. Some said it was morphine taken to relieve the pain. Others were less charitable. Anyhow, she was swallowed up by the remorseless sea, leaving Geneva, a girl in her teens, to make what she could of life.

As Geneva grew older she crossed Mr. Aylesbury's path much more frequently than her mother had done. She was too keen-eyed not to see something of his real nature, and too frank to withhold all of such knowledge from him. Instead of regarding him as a great and mighty being, who had fought his way from poverty to wealth, able now to give her a dowry of noble proportions, she actually looked down upon him as a pitiable money-grub who had spent his life in wriggling and crawling on the earth.

Inheriting all her mother's vivacity as well as much of her romantic zeal, and having no inconsiderable portion of her father's shrewdness and tenacity of purpose, she developed a character strongly marked in many ways. Fairly tall, built on lines as shapely as a racing yacht, with a keen sense of what was becoming in raiment, a face strong enough to save it from being regarded as merely pretty, having, though, such vivacity and expression as made it wonderfully attractive, eyes that looked out upon the world in splendid fearlessness, and with a bearing always easy and self-possessed, Geneva Aylesbury made sad havoc with impressionable hearts.

For some time Mr. Rawson Wamphrey, president of the Gotham Bank, an institution of which Mr. Aylesbury was a prominent director, had looked with much favor upon Geneva. But this was not surprising; for, as already intimated, Geneva had numberless admirers.

On returning to the city early in September—for Mr. Aylesbury spent only a few weeks at Saratoga—Geneva was surprised to learn that the Warristons had gone out of town and were not expected to return. She could not understand the reason of this. Without pretensions of large wealth, the Warristons had lived in an easy, pleasant way, and at their house she had met many of the best people.

In her way Eleanor Warriston was quite popular. She was probably rather serious for her years, often looking at things with a gravity almost

formidable. Still, she had a lurking humor, and at times would flash out some remark or reply which, like a wave breaking in the sunlight, had a brilliance all its own. Though not much older than Miss Warriston, Geneva often deferred to her, receiving from her counsels and admonitions, which, if given by another, would have fallen upon dull ears. And then, as iron sharpeneth iron, Geneva in turn imparted to Miss Warriston a measure of her shrewd, matter-of-fact way in dealing with life. The girls, therefore, were good friends, and, both being generous, sincere, clear-eyed, and incapable of sentimental shams, their friendship gave promise of lifelong endurance. Geneva also liked Robert Warriston, treating him as a younger brother, and, though once in a while he would hold her hand longer than was really necessary, even going so far at times as to make love to her, she would only laugh at him and say:

"Now, Robert, do n't be silly!"

Then Robert would blush like a schoolboy caught in some foolish trick; for he was younger than Geneva, and his time for real love-making had not yet come.

"Do you mean to say the Warristons were forced to offer their home for sale?" Geneva asked her father one morning as they sat at breakfast, a look of wonder in her eyes.

"That is what I mean," he answered, helping himself to another chop.

"But I do n't understand it," the look deepening to one of perplexity. "Mr. Warriston was

fairly well of. Robert had a splendid opening for so young a man. To give up everything and leave town in this way is very strange."

"Nothing strange about it," replied Mr. Aylesbury, as the servant took his coffee cup to have it refilled. "Mr. Warriston went into some speculation which did n't turn out as he expected. In other words, the market went against him, and he had to pay up," now stirring his coffee after having taken an extra lump of sugar.

"But Mr Warriston had given up business. Eleanor and I were speaking of this not long since. She said her father had worked hard for forty years and intended to rest. I remember, at the time, wishing you would do the same."

"Thanks, you are very kind. I think, though, I know my own business best," Mr. Aylesbury said, having now disposed of his second chop, and engaging with a boiled egg.

"Those who look on often see most of the game," Geneva retorted, but not unkindly. "When a man has made a competence he ought to give up business and begin to get something out of life."

"Become a philanthropist, start soup kitchens, attend charity meetings. The dear, old man on exhibition is the fad just now. Faugh!"

"Better that than the dear, old man who takes no interest in anything but himself. It seems to me—"

"I am tired of your everlasting 'it seems to me.' Sometimes 'it seems to me' you have a whole raft of notions and fads."

"Probably. Anything not in your line is a notion or a fad. But let us come back to the Warristons. What can be done for them?"

"I do n't know, and what is more, I do n't care," and Mr. Aylesbury pushed back his chair, then opened the morning's paper, intimating in this unceremonious way his desire for the conversation to cease.

"But, papa, the Warristons are friends of ours, and we ought to help them if we can," Geneva said, a distinct note of entreaty in her voice.

"They may be friends of yours," Mr. Aylesbury answered, grimly, "but they are nothing to me. If Mr. Warriston was fool enough to do as people say he did, he must take the consequences. The man who dances should pay the piper."

"Perhaps you will tell me how it happened, as you evidently know," Geneva replied with some heat, her father's unfeeling dismissal of the Warristons having aroused her indignation.

"Well, if you must know, I will tell you. Robert, that paragon of honesty and smartness, thought he would make as much money in a week as his father had done in a lifetime. So he 'borrowed'—that is the polite term—some of his employer's money and went into what is known as a deal. Then he had to 'borrow' more, and still more, until one fine morning he was found out. Then he ran away, leaving his father in a nice mess. The whole thing cost Mr. Warriston a pretty penny. This is what comes of having sons smarter than their fathers. If Robert Warriston had been

my son, I'd have let him go to jail and stay there for the next twenty years."

"So, in addition to losing their money, they have had all this shame and disgrace. And Robert was such a nice, bright young fellow. Poor Eleanor! How dreadful for Mr. Warriston! Can't you do something for them? Could n't you make some kind of an opening for Robert, and give the poor boy another chance?"

Geneva spoke in an eager, excited way, looking earnestly at her father, hoping for a favorable response.

"Yes, I can appoint him cashier of the Gotham, or Secretary of the Treasury. Such talents as his are too valuable for common service," Mr. Aylesbury answered sneeringly. "I think I see myself finding a place for Robert Warriston. I have other things on hand which, strange as it may seem to you, are of even more importance."

"I differ with you," Geneva said, speaking firmly, though fully conscious of her father's coarse sneer. "There is nothing of more importance in the life of any man than the saving of another man from ruin. Think of what this means to the Warristons."

"I have told you I care nothing about the Warristons. Their affairs are no concern of mine."

"But they should be. Such things are the concern of every right-thinking man."

"'It seems to me,'" this with another sneer, "you will soon be ready to manage my business to suit yourself. Robert Warriston undertook the

same thing with his father, and see what it has led to."

"Who put Robert Warriston up to this?"

"How should I know?"

"My fear is you do know."

"What then?"

"Just this," Geneva said, rising from her chair and looking fearlessly at her father, "the men who tempted Robert Warriston, as honest and true-hearted a fellow as ever lived, hoping in this way to get at Mr. Warriston's property, are despicable thieves, without one grain of honesty or honor."

Mr. Aylesbury drew in his lips in a hard, cruel way. He pulled down his brows till they met in a heavy frown. His eyes flashed with angry light; but he said nothing, resuming his paper as though the matter had been disposed of.

But Geneva was in a mood which Mr. Aylesbury could not restrain. A splendid anger had taken possession of her. Every drop of her mother's romantic blood was tingling with shame in her veins.

"Father," she said, still standing and speaking like a priestess beside her altar, "Eleanor Warriston is my friend. Some of the happiest hours of my life have been spent in her home. That home is now broken up. Mr. Warriston has been robbed. Robert's name is covered with disgrace. As sure as there is a God in heaven, there will be a terrible reckoning for these things."

"You need n't blaze and storm at me," Mr. Aylesbury said, lifting a white but angry face from

the paper. "Your Saratoga friend, Mr. Bodell, is the one to blame."

"Mr. Bodell! The gentleman I met at Mrs. Maitland's?"

"Yes, he is responsible for the whole business."

"I thought you did n't know Bodell," Geneva said, turning from the window where she had been standing for a few moments, and once more facing her father. "You were introduced to him by Mrs. Maitland."

Mr. Aylesbury instantly saw his mistake in speaking of Bodell. In his desire to shield himself he had gone too far. Meantime the clear, shrewd eyes of Geneva were looking steadily at him.

Seeing no immediate way of escape, Mr. Aylesbury, ostrich-like, hid his head behind the newspaper. Geneva's question, therefore, remained unanswered. But just as the big, ungainly body of the ostrich stands in full view, though its head is buried in the sand, so was the answer which he refused to give. There are times when an open lie is better than a cowardly evasion. A falsehood shot out on the impulse of the moment is more honest than an ambush of silence, behind which falsehood and deception lie hidden. In point of fact, Mr. Aylesbury had answered Geneva's question, and more significantly than if he had spoken.

Soon after, he went to his office, nor was the subject resumed for some time.



THE Gotham Bank, in which Stephen Derwent was a teller, could not claim distinction for either architectural beauty or massive proportions; but being at the lower end of the city, within easy reach of certain Wall Street clients, it enjoyed favors and privileges not accorded to some more pretentious institutions. Mr. Wamphrey, the president, had a way of keeping his own counsel, an example closely observed by the cashier, Mr. Strathford; and as both of these gentlemen had an implicit following among the directors, no embarrassing questions were ever asked.

Mr. Wamphrey, though on the steady side of fifty, was unmarried, having failed to respond to certain matrimonial overtures with which he had been favored at different times.

Mr. Strathford had not been so remiss, and even after the first Mrs. Strathford retired from this weary, wicked world, leaving to his care sundry junior Strathfords, he again essayed the mighty task of bringing a woman into a state of subjection.

The first Mrs. Strathford was a woman of simple tastes and quiet life, content with her home and its surroundings, and, all things considered, made an excellent wife and mother. But when Mr. Strathford came to make his second venture into the holy, but often uncertain, estate, it was no quiet, simple woman who was chosen to bear his name, but a maiden of high degree, of many ambitions, and with desires almost limitless in their range.

At first he enjoyed getting into his dress-coat, something he rarely used under the former *régime*, and going out with her; for she was a dashy, brilliant woman, fully able to sustain herself anywhere. And then it pleased him to have men at his table who owned yachts, country houses, famous pictures, or horses, as the case might be. All this was grateful to Mr. Strathford; for he could easily remember where he had looked up to these magnates with a deference akin to awe. And now to see them in his home, or to visit in theirs upon terms of equality; to know that his wife met the women of their households at afternoon teas and certain feminine functions; to hear himself addressed familiarly by men who at one time would hardly notice him, were matters from which Mr. Strathford derived much satisfaction.

But such enjoyments are expensive, and when once the pace is set, the tendency is to go faster. Hence there came a time when Mr. Strathford began to feel the shoe pinch him, and not on one foot merely. The savings accumulated under the

former administration had gone, and in their stead sundry obligations had come. But of this Mrs. Strathford knew nothing. Being a woman of superb taste, with a positive genius for color and effect, her dinner parties, and gatherings, and musicales were very popular. She also had rare tact, so distributing her invitations that people of rival sets never met under her roof. And so everything went on gayly.

"Lucky fellow Strathford is," one magnate said to another, as they stood in a corner of the reception-room, the crowd meantime pressing into the parlors, where some literary and musical lions were on exhibition.

"I understand Mrs. Strathford brought him quite a large pile," was the rather singular reply.

"Which, of course, he can make the most of. Lots of chances down there."

"Chances he won't let slip."

"He will be president of the Gotham one of these days."

"How so?"

"Wamphrey is likely to resign."

"Anything wrong?"

"No; but Wamphrey has gone into mining, and will probably go West."

"Is n't this something new?"

"He has been dabbling in mines for some time. Recently he went into a big deal with Aylesbury, buying a whole lot of Montana."

"I wish him joy of all he makes out of Aylesbury."

"So do I."

"Wamphrey could stay with the Gotham as long as he pleased. That, and his other pickings, should satisfy him."

"True, but Aylesbury has a daughter; Wamphrey is unmarried. The rest you can readily imagine."

"So that is how the cat jumps."

Then the magnates looked at each other for about three seconds after which the first magnate so contracted the muscles of his right eye that it winked in the most prehensible way; to which the second magnate responded by a puckering of his lips as if he meant to indulge in a genuine whistle. These preliminaries having been duly observed, the first magnate nodded with the gravity of a Chinese mandarin, a proceeding closely followed by the second magnate, only in lesser degree of the principle that echoes rarely equal the original sound.

"Wamphrey is here," the first magnate now remarked, having for the moment exhausted his pantomimic resources.

"Why?" asked the second magnate, who had a natural curiosity to see Mr. Wamphrey in the rôle of a dovelorn youth paying court to the daughter of Jacob Aylesbury.

"In there with the screamers," said the first magnate, with a movement of his thumb to indicate the music-room.

"He must be in love to stand that noise. What a howl that woman is making!"

"That is Mrs. Strathford's latest. Imagine being in the same room with such a yell as that."

The magnate had cause for provocation, as at that moment the singer by a chromatic ladder had climbed to the top of her voice when it broke like a rocket in midair, dispersing in a medley of ear-splitting sound. The songstress, a stout, Frenchy-looking woman, with rouge enough and to spare, was heartily applauded, as indeed she well deserved to be; for when people deliberately put themselves in the way of being tortured they should most certainly reward the one who tortures them.

Again the two magnates expressed themselves pantomimically, though not so distinctly as before; for people were hurrying from the music-room, and the spectacle of two florid-faced, baldheaded gentlemen, winking and puckering at each other might have caused some comment.

Just then Miss Aylesbury, attended by Mr. Wamphrey, came within the vision of the magnates, who had managed to keep their places in the corner.

"Well, I don't blame Wamphrey," said the one with the winking eye, after looking at Miss Aylesbury as she walked across the room.

"Neither do I," replied the one with the puckering lip, whose scrutiny had been equally careful.

On general principles Geneva Aylesbury would be considered handsome rather than beautiful, for she was above the average woman in height, and, though not masculine in the least degree, she embodied more of strength than most women pos-

sess. Her head was shapely and well set which, combined with a certain alertness, added dignity as well as verve to her movements. And, then, her face was much more than an aggregation of features. No one ever looked into her eyes merely to know what color they were, or studied her lips because of their curves. To have done so would have been like weighing the gold-leaf on a Raphael-framed picture in order to ascertain its value! Being a New Yorker, she knew how to robe herself with exquisite taste, her attractions never losing anything because of inharmonious raiment. This evening, at the Strathfords, she wore a white gown of soft silk, with just lace enough to save it from being severe, while for jewels she had limited herself to pearls. She may have been conscious of it, or she may not—for the feminine consciousness is too subtle and delicate to be disposed of abruptly—nevertheless, as she stood in the front parlor where the light played upon her expressive face and with the glow and excitement of the evening shining in her eyes, most assuredly, to put it in phrase which, though millenniums old, is ever fresh and new, "she was fair to look upon," and the enthusiasm of the magnates need excite no surprise.

"My dear Geneva, how glad I am to see you! And you look even more charming than ever. It seems an age since I saw you," said Mrs. Maitland as she came forward smilingly, and speaking in her effusive way.

She cordially disliked Miss Aylesbury, just as

she did Miss Warriston, or any other woman who dared to be young and attractive.

Miss Aylesbury responded to Mrs. Maitland's greeting in the way common with society people; for, though thoroughly persuaded that the smiling gusher was as hollow as a soap-bubble, still she was careful not to convey this feeling in the least measure. So they smiled pleasantly at each other, and said the usual things proper for such occasions.

"Mr. Bodell is here," this in an effective whisper. "You remember him, of course—the dark, handsome man, introduced to us by Cousin Allen." And again Mrs. Maitland smiled in her effusive way.

"Yes, I remember Mr. Bodell," Geneva replied, with something of an early frost in her tone.

"He was quite marked in his attentions at Saratoga," Mrs. Maitland said, with rare delicacy of intonation and emphasis.

"He was courteous, and at times fairly agreeable, more than that I fail to remember."

The frost in Geneva's tone was now very evident.

"You dear, sweet child," was Mrs. Maitland's response. "Of course, everything must be different now," glancing at the same moment to the corner where Mr. Wamphrey was standing; for he had joined our friends the magnates, who were members of his financial circle.

"And why, pray?" Geneva asked, for the moment off her guard.

"O, Geneva, how innocent you are!" Mrs. Maitland replied, playfully tapping Miss Aylesbury with her fan and looking again at Mr. Wamphrey.

Among her special and intimate friends, Geneva had heard of Mr. Wamphrey's devotion, the subject affording much amusement whenever it was mentioned. But here was Mrs. Maitland actually regarding the matter as serious and in a way not to be misunderstood. Geneva's first feeling was one of anger. But that, if shown, would simply give Mrs. Maitland an opportunity, under cover of her gracious, effusive way, of saying mean, spiteful things. In shrewdness, as well as wit, Geneva was more than the equal of Mrs. Maitland; but for the stab æsthetic, the thrust artistic, the lie ingenious, Mrs. Maitland had a reputation all her own.

"I trust Miss Aylesbury has not forgotten me," Mr. Bodell said, as he presented himself, a few moments after Mrs. Maitland, with her alluring smile, had gone to another part of the room.

Geneva's greeting was not cordial. The frost in her tone when Mrs. Maitland had spoken of him was now deeper by several degrees. This Mr. Bodell was not prepared for. At first he thought she had only assumed this bearing for a purpose, and that later in the evening she would accept a return to their former relations. But she pointedly avoided him, and more than once withdrew from a circle when he would join it. Then an angry light kindled in his dark eyes, and a scornful smile came upon his lips.

"Of course, you have heard of Miss Aylesbury's engagement to Mr. Wamphrey," Mrs. Maitland said to him on her way upstairs to get her wraps.

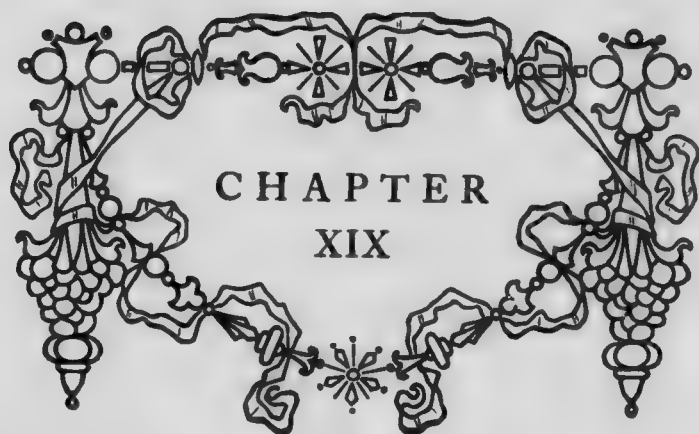
"No," he answered, in truthful surprise.

"Strange, is n't it?" she asked.

"Very," his eyes turning unconsciously from Mrs. Maitland's smiling face to that of Miss Aylesbury, who just then was speaking to Mr. Wamphrey.

This, then, was the explanation of Miss Aylesbury's frigid air, and her evident desire to ignore the friendly relations of Saratoga. But Mr. Bodell did not know of Geneva's recent conversation with her father concerning the Warristons, neither did he dream of the contempt with which she had spoken of him.

Soon after Mrs. Maitland came downstairs cloaked and wrapped, for the air was like that of December. Having a spare seat in her carriage she invited Mr. Bodell to occupy it, which he gladly did, as he was anxious to learn something more of Miss Aylesbury's engagement to Mr. Wamphrey.



WHEN the Carlisle party reached Montana, they found a surprising state of things. The whole country seemed given up to mining. There were mines everywhere—mines in the hills, mines in the valleys, mines just opening, and mines in full swing. In one place whole townships, containing hundreds of square miles, were in control of Eastern capitalists, and the copper to be taken out of this territory was estimated as something enormous. In another place copper was only an incident, a mere trifle to pay current expenses. The expectation here was gold, and in quantity to make the fortune of every shareholder. Every other man carried a map, and the easy, assured air with which he would unroll that map, locating great cities and thriving towns, showed his supreme faith in the boundless future. In one place a city would soon be built rivaling everything east of the Alleghanies. Through another section a railroad was planned, a double-tracked railroad, with the latest rolling stock, and fully furnished in

every way. Towns, therefore, were springing up along the route of this iron highway; that is, map towns, land-broker towns, towns to be carried around in prospectus form and shown to credulous investors. As Carlisle took knowledge of these things, a certain old song got mixed up in his mind:

“To the East, to the East, the land of the Hub,
Where the shekels are waiting the Western tub;
Where foolish investors are standing in line,
To drop their hard savings in some copper-mine.”

Fred Westerhall was silent for some time after this outbreak of Carlisle, his face wearing a pained, anxious expression. Then he proposed:

“Which is the worse, for body or purse,
Humbugaria, or Malaria?”

“Is that a conundrum or a brain flash?” War-riston asked.

“Robert,” said Fred, “you have no idea of the sublime.”

“You are mistaken,” answered Robert; “it is lime put under brick, a situation of which you are deserving.”

The stage-ride from San Gabriel to Cressona afforded Mr. Carlisle additional facilities for observing the ease with which Eastern capital is disposed of by Western brokers. As the horses knew the road, and the driver knew the horses, and there being no annoying time-schedule to em-

barrass the stage, its movements were determined by circumstances. Hank Dobbins was the driver's name, Dobbins, however, being rarely given him, except in court or on legal documents. He had driven that stage for a number of years, and was a familiar figure at both ends of the line. With keen gray eyes, heavy, overhanging brows, a face strongly marked, hands and wrists of iron, a dead shot, cautious as well as fearless, an expert coachman, his fitness for the place was generally conceded. Twice the road agents had "held him up." This was soon after he had taken the stage; but in an unguarded moment one dropped his eyes, which he never raised again, Hank's revolver making such a movement impossible. Then he gave the whip to the horses, sending them tearing along like mad devils, the coach swinging and swaying most fearfully. The agents who were inside the coach, instead of securing any plunder, were glad to escape with their lives; for at the rate Hank was driving he would soon have landed them in Cressona, where a short shrift awaited all of their kind.

Another time, a bright, moon-lit night, returning alone with the mail, having received an inkling of some intended courtesies from this same band, Hank got down from his seat within easy sight of the men who were waiting for him, presumably to take a stone from the foot of one of his leaders. Instantly four men on horseback dashed out from the shadow of a clump of trees; but before they could rein up beside the coach,

he had hit two of them with that terrible revolver, the third had his horse shot under him, while the fourth rode away leaving his companions to their fate. Hank did the same, and what became of these men he never knew. But from that time on his coach was unmolested. Road agents troubled him no more. It was generally understood in that region that Hank's revolver was always within reaching distance.

"So you are going to the 'Cutty Hunk?'" he said to Carlisle, who sat with him on the front seat.

Carlisle nodded by way of reply.

"Rough country over there," Hank remarked.

"Country or people?" Carlisle asked.

"Both."

"The mines, though, are all right?"

"The mines are right enough. The question is, who owns them?"

"I think that question can be easily answered," Carlisle said, quietly.

"Perhaps."

"The mines are good property, are they not?"

"That's where the trouble is," Hank said, easing up a little, the horses showing sign of fatigue. "Dogs do n't fight over a clean bone; that is, dogs with any kind of sense."

"There are lots of clean bones lying around this part of the country," Carlisle remarked, using Hank's figure of speech.

"The way you Eastern people throw good money away is wonderful," Hank said, tightening

up the reigns; for they had come to a bend in the road which required steady driving. Once the bend was rounded, the horses were allowed a breathing spell, which gave Carlisle an opportunity of lighting a cigar. Passing the case to Hank, he told him to help himself, which he did without demur.

"From New York?" Hank said, after he had lighted the cigar.

"I plead guilty," Carlisle answered.

"Come about the Cutty Hunk?"

"Guilty again."

"Surveyors, assayers, or promoters?"

"No; owners."

"Then you are Mr. Aylesbury?"

"Aylesbury! What has he to do with Cutty Hunk?"

"Only that he claims to be principal owner; has so telegraphed to the superintendent. Expects to have a man out here in a few days to take formal possession."

"Bodell's work," Carlisle muttered.

He had no intention of speaking the name; but drivers of stage-coaches, men whose ears are trained like those of an Indian, and who are as alert as soldiers on picket, hear with a keenness often extraordinary. Carlisle, therefore, had hardly mentioned Bodell's name before Hank asked, in eager, excited tones:

"Bodell, did you say? James Bodell?"

Carlisle was too frank to attempt a denial.

"Yes, I said Bodell; James Bodell."

"About eighteen years ago a certain James Bodell came here from the East, with whom I have an account to settle," Hank said, in a low, distinct voice.

Nothing more was said for some time, Hank giving his undivided attention to the horses, urging them with both voice and hand. Several miles had yet to be traveled, and sundown was coming on apace.

It is generally understood that, where doctors differ, the patient dies; but in mining countries, where the owners differ, the miners do not die except as they happen to kill each other; for they live to fight, and fight to live. At heart man is a barbarian. The pounding of a sheepskin on a drumhead means more to his soul than a chorus of angels. He would rather handle a rifle than a harp, though the harp have keys of ivory and strings of fine gold.

These Montana miners were no worse than others, and the genuine enthusiasm with which they went into a fight proved, if any proof were ever needed, that the line between savagery and civilization is largely imaginary.

Hank Dobbins knew of the trouble at Cutty Hunk, and that already the miners were taking sides in what threatened to be a serious struggle. He desired, therefore, to bring in the stage by early twilight, this being the time of least disturbance.

All this time Carlisle had been making a study of Hank, flashing, now and then, a keen, search-

ing glance at the rugged, weather-beaten face, which was set in such a grim, earnest way. He was not long in making up his mind that Hank's account with Bodell meant serious business. The resolute set of that jaw and the implacable look on that face were not to be mistaken. But it may be Bodell was only a coincidence in name. More than likely they were thinking of different men. Watching his opportunity, when the horses allowed of easier conversation, Carlisle said:

"The Bodell I mean is trying to defraud some friends of mine, and it is doubtless at his instigation that Mr. Aylesbury claims the Cutty Hunk mines. But your Bodell may not be my Bodell."

Mr. Carlisle smiled as he said this, an inquiring smile which lawyers often use to advantage. Hank smiled also, but his smile had iron in it. It was stern, terrible, pitiless, like the opening of a dungeon-door, only not to admit the light, but to cause the prisoner to meet his doom.

"We will talk of James Bodell at another time," Hank answered, without taking his eyes from the horses or the iron from his lips.

After a run of some distance, which brought the mining settlement within sight, Hank said:

"Where are you folks going to stop?"

"With the superintendent," Carlisle replied.

"Better not."

"On account of the trouble at Cutty Hunk?"

"Yes."

"Can you suggest a better place?"

"Yes. My daughter lives at this end of the

town. I stop with her when I come to Cutty Hunk, which is every other day. I can drop you there before taking the mail-bag to the office. As I have no other passengers, you can all slip off the stage without any one being the wiser. I will whisper a word to the superintendent, and he can come up later. You can then fix your plans for to-morrow. Just at this time Cutty Hunk is not a pleasant place for strangers."

Without a moment's hesitation Carlisle gratefully accepted the suggestion. He saw the wisdom of it, and yet he imagined that Hank's unsettled account with Bodell had something to do with the generous proposition. In a few minutes the stage stopped before a rough frame building, from which a woman of not far from forty years of age came out to welcome Hank, greeting him most affectionately.

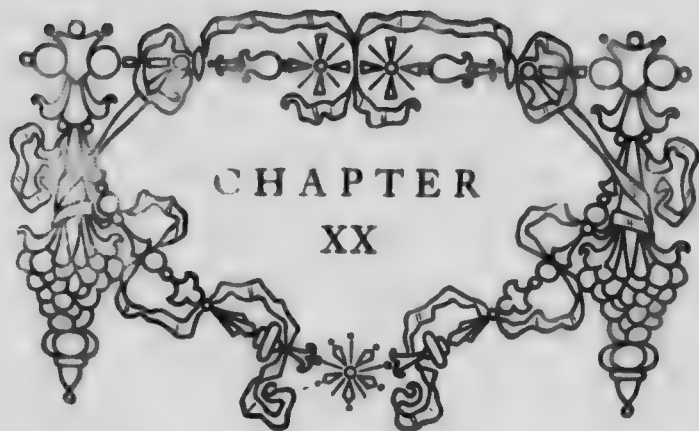
"Where is Zona?" Hank inquired.

"Down at the office," was the reply. "Mr. Gray sent for her to copy some papers. He wanted them ready for you to take back to-morrow."

"My daughter, gentlemen," Hank said, when the three travelers had descended from the stage. "Emma, these gentlemen are going to remain with us over night."

Gathering up their baggage, which was not extensive, the three men prepared to enter the house, when Hank called out to his daughter, as he was driving off:

"I will bring Zona when I come back, and won't be gone more than half an hour."



WHEN Carlisle was conducted to his room by Hank's daughter, he could not but observe signs of both neatness and refinement. Everything was plain, some things were primitive, yet the room suggested something more than a mere shelter or place of rest. The little window-curtains were of cheap common scrim, but they were clean and neatly arranged. The few ornaments set here and there were not art of the highest type, still the good taste in the placing of them was evident. The wall-paper had not been put on by a trained artist, but it covered walls which would have been unsightly, besides hiding various cracks and stains. And when, a few minutes later, he returned to what might be regarded as the sitting-room, the same signs were manifest. A rag carpet covered the center of the floor, not a frayed, straggling thing, raveling out with strings and streamers in all directions, but a neat, well-kept carpet, upon which a fair-sized, and by no means unhandsome,

table stood in conscious pride. In all truth, most of the furniture of this room was not elaborate, but it had an air of comfort, one or two chairs being positively inviting.

The coming of three unexpected guests somewhat strained the accommodations of this Cutty Hunk home, but in mining countries domestic arrangements are more elastic than in great cities where space is measured by inches.

Sitting by the window, in one of the chairs referred to, Carlisle watched, with both interest and amusement, his hostess provide for the immediate needs of the newcomers. The kitchen, though architecturally in the same class with a common woodshed, had conveniences of various kinds, by which an appetizing meal was being put on its passage. From his chair Carlisle, without being in the least intrusive, could follow the movements of Hank's daughter, at the same time carrying on with her an easy, pleasant conversation. As a girl she had undoubtedly been very pretty, that sweet, simple prettiness, which for a few years is so attractive. Her hair lacked the luxuriance of her girlhood, when it was so wayward and troublesome; still it retained much of its former gloss and color. Her eyes had faded somewhat; for originally they were light blue, a shade upon which time works mischief; but they held something of their brightness, and at times twinkled bravely. Possibly her complexion had suffered most of all; for she was now almost colorless, the inevitable fate of those who are pink and white

in their youth. Her figure, though, was firm and strong, graceful as in earlier years, but matured and developed. She did not impress Carlisle as a person of much inward resources, or of strong, dominant character, but rather as a sweet, innocent woman, easily influenced, capable of following blindly where her affections led. Under the light of the lamp, Carlisle saw upon her face lines of anxiety and suffering, and when the smile faded from her lips, and the flash of humor died out of her eyes, she seemed to have a hunted, frightened look, as though there was something in her life from which she was trying to escape.

Warriston and Westerhall, after washing off some of the road-dust, went to "elongate themselves into the perpendicular," as Fred put it.

"I do n't feel stagestruck," he said, "but I am stage-bumped. Shakespeare must have had a long coach-ride before he wrote of shuffling off this mortal coil. He undoubtedly referred to the twist in his legs which stage-riding involves."

"It is 'arms and the man I sing,' as my friend Mr. Pope would observe," said Robert, stretching himself with grateful enjoyment of the privilege.

"I would n't sing at all, Robert, if I were you," Fred remarked seriously. "There is trouble enough in Cutty Hunk now, if our worthy Jehu is to be believed, and if you start to sing, goodness only knows what would happen."

"You are simply jealous, Fred. My singing is heavenly, divine, and angelic harmony compared with yours."

"I understand now why so few people care to go to heaven. Indeed, Bob, if you are to be one of the chief musicians there, I rather think you'll have to excuse me."

"I'm glad to know you have ever thought of such a place; one would n't have suspected it from your walk and conversation."

Having regard to Hank's caution, the young men did not go far, contenting themselves with a short walk down what was known as the street. Hank's description of Cutty Hunk as a rough place was fully borne out by what they saw. Such men as they met looked reckless and forbidding. At different points along the street a glare of light would be seen indicating some drinking-place or gaming resort. Shouting, swearing, a snatch of some common song, the uproar of angry voices, then a street brawl, gave them the distinct impression that, as a quiet, peaceable retreat, Cutty Hunk had rivals much nearer home.

On coming back to the house they found that Hank had returned, accompanied by Zona. As before, the introduction was not strikingly elaborate, Hank's idea of that ceremony being:

"Gentlemen, this is Zona, my granddaughter."

At the first glance Zona looked like a fully-developed woman, but on closer scrutiny the girl revealed herself, a girl of about seventeen. In feature she resembled her mother; but she was darker, taller, cast in larger mold, with a dash of the Oriental in her bearing. There was something about her which seemed familiar to Carlisle, and

he looked at her keenly as well as curiously. He wondered where he had seen that peculiar expression, that quick, characteristic movement of the lips, that smile so mesmeric in its influence. Then he would catch a tone, a cadence, upon which memory seized, and he found himself listening to a voice which he must have heard before.

Closely scanning Hank, he looked to see if Zona had inherited from him these decided traits. But Hank's eyes were not black, neither was his smile alluring. His voice, too, was gruff and harsh, without the least strain of vibrancy. Carlisle was puzzled, and incautiously allowed it to be seen on his face. This Hank instantly detected, and a glance of lightning passed between the two men, of anger from the one, of surprise from the other, and in the flashings of that glance Carlisle read the name of Zona's father—James Bodell!

Later in the evening, the superintendent, Mr. Grey, came up from the office, and Cutty Hunk matters were discussed with much interest. For some reason, Mr. Grey was known among the miners as "Nibs," a name which, strange as it may seem, implied both respect and authority. A practical engineer, cool, daring, able to handle a gun almost as well as Hank Dobbins, Mr. Grey was eminently fitted for his position. More than once he had taken his life in his hands, facing odds before which other men would have quailed. Capable, shrewd, thoroughly reliable, young enough to have plenty of hot blood, but sufficiently

experienced to be wary, he made a typical superintendent. This Carlisle recognized early in the evening, and took Mr. Grey into his confidence.

So far Mr. Grey was not in close touch with the Aylesbury syndicate, other than the notice which had been served on him concerning the new ownership, and the coming of a representative to take possession. As Mr. Grey was indebted to Mr. Warriston for his present position, and ever since the opening of the mines had done hard, honest work, the announcement that the mines had passed to other control came upon him as an unpleasant surprise. Then he learned of certain operations which involved other properties under the same management, and he found himself wondering if the Warriston interests had been sold out to make way for a big mining scheme. He had written to Mr. Warriston, but receiving no reply, came to the conclusion that the Aylesbury syndicate had managed, in some way, to obtain his consent to their plan of reorganization. This he could not reconcile with his knowledge of Mr. Warriston, so he was more than glad when Hank Dobbins told him of Carlisle's arrival and of the new developments that were possible.

"You mean that this Aylesbury combination intends to secure possession, in some way, of the Cutty Hunk property?" he asked in amazement, when Carlisle had given him an idea of the scheme.

"Cutty Hunk, with its rich deposits and wonderful assays, is to be used as a decoy duck, so it is an essential part of the plan," Carlisle replied.

From Mr. Craig, Carlisle had learned the purposes of the Aylesbury syndicate, whole counties having been secured, some of them hundreds of miles from Cutty Hunk. Attractive advertisements had been prepared for the newspapers. A general raid all through the East was contemplated. Shares almost without number were to be put on the market. Men of glib tongue and insinuating address were to travel up and down the land. Men not accustomed to the ordinary methods of business, college professors, teachers, farmers, clergymen, were to be approached, and such adroit appeals made to them that they would at once fall into the snare. To the right persons stock was to be given in return for such influence as they would exert. Already numerous inquiries were being made, and an immense rush was certain when the stock once became a matter of public sale.

Bodell was the projector of this scheme, though Aylesbury nominally stood at the head, while prominent as directors were Wamphrey and Strathford, of the Gotham Bank. But there was a fly in the ointment. And that fly was the Warriston stock in Cutty Hunk. How many times Bodell had sworn at Stennett for letting that stock go! And where had it gone? Twice Bodell had wired from Saratoga, telling Stennett to get that stock back no matter what it cost. But not a trace of it could be found. All Stennett knew of the matter was the visit of a mild-mannered, benevolent-looking old gentleman who looked like

a country clergyman, and who bought the stock. As Stennett very truthfully said in defense:

"You thought, just as I did, that when Warriston loaded himself with it he was a fool. And how was I to know that the old bloke who called here was not another fool?"

"An agent of Aylesbury's, most likely," Bodell remarked, angrily.

"You think Aylesbury would be up to such a dodge?" Stennett asked, doubtfully.

"If you knew Aylesbury you would n't ask such a question. He is up to anything and everything."

"But this is a mean, contemptible trick."

"All the more reason why we should suspect Aylesbury."

"I thought we were all working together on this scheme."

"O, yes; we are a band of brothers," Bodell answered with a sneer. "But we will even it up with Mr. Aylesbury before we get through. What say you?"

"The old scoundrel," replied Stennett, who had just returned from the management of a private gambling-house at Long Branch, and was consequently an authority on all matters of honesty and honor; "to take advantage of his friends in such a way is worse than card-sharping."

Aylesbury thought Bodell had the Warriston stock, for Bodell had told him so at Saratoga. And the worthy Jacob was thinking the same kindly things of his associates as they were of him. Each man, therefore, was prepared to cook

the other man's hare; and yet neither man had the hare to cook, a circumstance of some moment as it afterwards turned out. So the Cutty Hunk Mining Company was formed, Cutty Hunk itself being taken for granted.

With old Mr. Warriston out of the way, and Carlisle happily disposed of by a railroad accident, all other interests were of minor importance. A hawklike swoop, descending on the mines without waiting for the slow movement of the courts, taking immediate possession, and assuming direct ownership of Cutty Hunk with all the property involved, was Bodell's plan of operations. He knew how easily claims could be set aside, for had he not prospected and surveyed in this same territory years before? And who could oppose them? Carlisle might have done so, for some of his clients had large interests in Cutty Hunk; but, as Bodell sneeringly remarked:

"An honest lawyer has no business in such a world as this. His loss is our gain."

All these things were freely spoken of around Hank Dobbins' supper-table, and, after the dishes had been removed, maps and surveys were spread out, over which most of the company pored interestedly for some time.

But it must be confessed that Robert Warriston, after his first flush of eager interest, did not give his undivided attention to the proceedings. His eyes insisted upon wandering from the maps on the table to a girl in a chair. Though following bravely the general conversation, his thoughts

■

strayed, but never leaving the room, at least not while Zona remained in it. Her dress, only a pretty print, but nattily made, he thought very becoming. Then her movements were so graceful; and what eyes she had! Sometimes their eyes met, and what more natural than for two young people to look at each other? Once he smiled at a remark of Mr. Grey, continuing the smile while he looked at her; then she smiled, and a feeling of comradeship was immediately established. In removing some dishes from the table, she was forced to bend over his chair, and her arm touched his, causing both of them a peculiar sensation. Feeling that the coming of three unlooked-for guests involved considerable labor, Robert felt constrained to share a part of the extra service. He tried to make himself useful by assisting Zona in such labor as fell to her. Of course he made mistakes; he put articles in the wrong place, and perhaps did more harm than good; but Zona only laughed, and she laughed in such a bright, rippling way that he laughed in return. Before the evening was half spent he had changed his mind about Cutty Hunk. On the stage, when talking with Fred Westerhall, he had spoken feelingly of the long, lonely evenings that were before him, and made Fred promise to write him every few days, so he would have something to break the terrible monotony. But this feeling of desolation was fast passing away. He no longer regarded himself as an exile, or New York as the center of earthly bliss. Ah me! what a strangely resilient thing the

human heart is, particularly a young man's heart, and still more particularly when a young, pretty girl is within whispering distance!

Thanks to Mr. Craig, who had been careful to forward all necessary documents, at the same time making everything legally secure, Carlisle was able to establish absolute control of Cutty Hunk. Mr. Grey, therefore, accepted without question the new order of things, and announced himself as willing to carry out any plans that might be proposed. Carlisle suggested going to the mines early next morning, and entering upon formal possession; but Hank, after making a circuit of the room two or three times, said in his abrupt way:

"Better not."

"Why not?" Carlisle asked.

"Let them show their hand first," Hank answered, still moving about restlessly; for he was laboring under strong excitement.

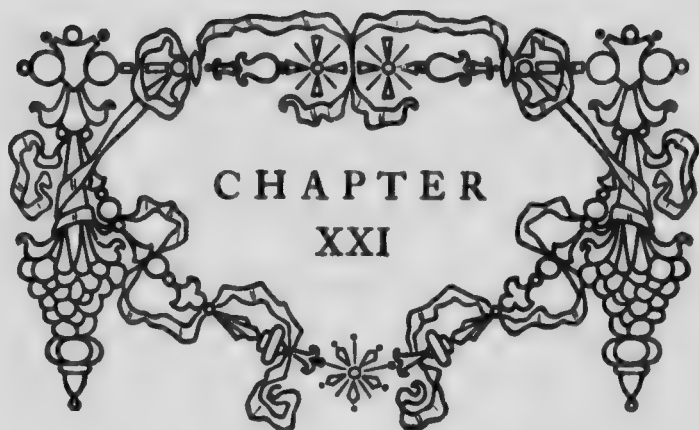
"Have they not already done that?" Carlisle questioned.

"Not even their finger-tips," Hank replied, coming to the table and taking up a map which remained unrolled. "Take my advice and lie low," he continued, looking meanwhile at the map; "let them have their head for a while. Do n't trouble about the reins more than to be sure you have them in your hand. When you are good and ready you can bring them up fast enough. You've got the papers, and can spill the whole coach-load any time you please. But a spill when the horses are in an easy walk do n't amount to much. Wait

till they 're going down-hill, when there 's a bend in the road, and the horses flying like mad. Then pitch them over with the coach on top of them."

When Hank first began to speak, Mr. Grey looked at him smilingly; for under the stage-coach terminology he discerned good sound sense; but as Hank went on, the superintendent felt that there were passions and motions at work not apparent on the surface. But Carlisle understood, and his eyes unconsciously turned to where Zona was now sitting beside her mother.

It was now late, so Mr. Grey went back to his rooms over the office, Zona and her mother retired for the night, Warriston and Westerhall soon did the same, leaving Hank and Carlisle to themselves.



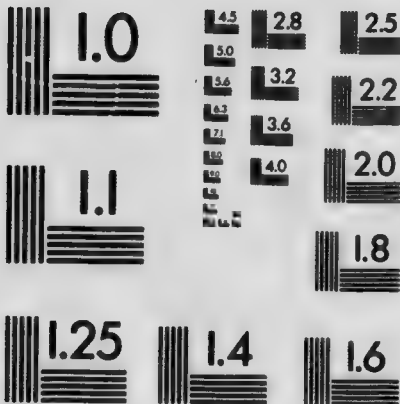
CARLISLE, now that Zona and her mother had left the room, asked Hank if he might indulge in a cigar, at the same time saying he was not yet ready to retire. His real reason for proposing this was that Hank, in case he desired it, might have an opportunity of speaking to him of Bodell. In that glance which early in the evening had passed between these two men, each had read something of the other's mind, but only enough to make more a necessity. With regard to Bodell there was a thorough understanding. The fact of his having lived in Montana years before, his familiarity with the region in which the Citty Hunk property was located, the unmistakable likeness to Zona, together with other things which had come out during the evening, established Bodell's identity beyond all question. But the exact relation of Hank's daughter had yet to be established; also the reason for the stage-driver's terrible hatred.

As an answer to Carlisle's suggestion, Hank,



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

declining the proffered cigar-case, took down from the mantelpiece a big cherrywood pipe, with a long stem, and began to fill it with plug tobacco, a small pouch of which he had drawn from one of his numerous pockets. This done, he lighted the pipe, smoking it German fashion, with the bowl in one of his hands. For a time nothing was said; indeed, so long did the silence continue that Carlisle's cigar was half smoked before another word was spoken. At length Hank said:

"Mr. Carlisle, we had better come to some kind of an understanding."

"You refer to Mr. Bodell and his relations to the Cutty Hunk?" Carlisle said, cautiously.

"Yes, I refer to Bodell; but the Cutty Hunk part of it can stand over for the present."

"But, Mr. Dobbins," Carlisle said, speaking in a frank yet serious tone, "you will please remember that we met this morning for the first time. We are, therefore, strangers to each other. I have no right then either to ask or expect your confidence. If—"

"Very true," the other interrupted; "but some men are easier to get acquainted with than others, and some men will find out more in a day than other men will in a lifetime. Now you have trusted me, considerable too, in Cutty Hunk matters. I am now going to trust you, if you will let me."

Hank's voice kept dropping as he spoke, losing much of its gruffness, and his closing words had a pathos which Carlisle could not but feel.

"You found out at supper-time that Zona was

Bodell's daughter; but you did not find out that my daughter is his wife. Well, she is, though she thinks he is dead, and has been dead for a long time. But I have kept track of him, and if he values his life he will give Montana a wide birth."

Hank paused, not to make his words more impressive—he was too much in earnest to think of such trifles—but to collect himself for the story he had now to tell.

Carlisle felt surprised at Hank's mention of Bodell's marriage. Though he had frequently met Bodell, and was acquainted with others who were supposed to be intimate with him, he had never heard anything of either wife or child. Bodell was generally considered "a man about town," who lived in bachelor apartments, a frequenter of clubs, a *bon vivant* without either matrimonial tendencies or desires. He talked flippantly of marriage, sneered at the mention of disinterested love, said pretty things when speaking to pretty women, and made sport of them in their absence, declared to his own immediate set that the man who burdened himself with a wife was a fool, and at the club had many things to say which would not look well in print.

But there were few who really knew anything of Bodell. There was an impression that he had spent some years in the West, mostly in the mining countries, where he had made some money, but, tiring of that sort of life, came to New York, going into business with Noel Stennett. That he

was married, and had a daughter on the verge of womanhood, never entered the thought of any one.

"I had a considerable part of a farm," Hark resumed after a long pause, "did some stock-raising, and was getting along in good shape, when Bodell came to our part of the country. He was then about twenty-two or twenty-three; and he was smart as chain lightning, one of the smartest fellows I ever knew. He was a surveyor or prospector of some kind, and, having plenty of room in our house, we took him to board. He made good company for my women folks, and both my wife and daughter got to be mortal fond of him. He knew all kinds of tricks and games, and could amuse a whole company by the hour. My son, Will, the same age about, used to follow him around like a shadow. Will had always been a good, steady lad, never giving either his mother or myself an uneasy hour. We placed great dependence on Will, and when I went over to Helena with stock, sometimes being gone a week, he took my place, and things went on all right. But after Bodell had been with us a spell, Will began to fall off in lots of ways. He would stay out nights. He spent a good deal of time at the Four Corners, a tavern down in the village. Then he got mixed up in all sorts of low company. His mother used to talk to him, and coax him, and for a time he'd be all right; but he'd go off again and be worse than ever. But I never once suspected Bodell, and sometimes I'd ask him to counsel with Will.

Nellie, that is my wife, set great store by Will. You see, he was her only son, and when he was at himself no more likely boy could be found anywhere."

Hank again paused, ostensibly to put his pipe back on the mantel-piece, but in reality to get time to control himself. After disposing of the pipe, he sat down again, not upright as before, but resting his elbows on his knees and a hand on either side of his face. As he resumed speaking, his voice hardly rose above a whisper.

"One night Will went out, it was in the early winter; but he never came back again. There was some trouble down at the Four Corners, just what I never knew. Bodell was there, and some one accused him of being a card-sharper and playing a snide game. Will took Bodell's part, and high words followed. They had all been drinking heavily, and in the excitement some one drew a revolver, and Will was shot dead. What a night that was! I can hear now the trampling and scuffling of feet as my Will was brought home. My poor wife went out of all control. She sat all that night beside the dead boy, talking to him and kissing the dear white face just as she did when he was a baby. She recovered a little, but never really lifted her head again. We kept back all of the story we could, making out it was some kind of an accident, but we could n't cover over everything. And, strange, I never connected Bodell with it. But then, you see, he told me his side of the story; and while he did n't appear to

blame Will, he made me think somehow that the boy had been hot-headed and foolish. None of the others who were mixed up in it ever came near me. Most likely they were too ashamed, and I never made any inquiry. Bodell came in and out the same as before; but Nellie could n't bear to have him touch her or even go near her. We thought this would pass away in time; but it did n't, and up to the last she'd give a kind of a shiver when he came anywhere near her. Being so weak and delicate, she was n't able to do much about the house, so Emma, that is my daughter, had to take her place."

Once more Hank paused; but this time he did not rise from his chair or even vary his position. He remained just as before, only silent. His face gave evidence of intense feeling; but there was no softness on it, neither were there any tears in his eyes. Better for him if there had been. But some natures have no access to those mysterious fountains, which, like rivers hidden in the earth's caverned deeps, restrain the fires that burn with such awful intensity. Hank Dobbins was of this class. His grief was denied the outlet which affords to many such grateful relief. A sob could no more express his sorrow than the rattling of a tin pan a thunderstorm crashing in the mountains.

"This brought Emma and Bodell a good deal together. A sweet girl Emma was. She knew no more of evil than a wild rose. She was thoughtless, just because she was so innocent. Well, as

I told you, Bodell was a smooth-tongued, artful villain, and with the kind of face most women like. So he set himself to win Emma just as he had Will. He kept talking to her about the life she might have in New York, and got her all stirred up and discontented with our life at home.

"I could n't make out what had come over Emma; but I thought, perhaps, she was troubled about Will. But gradually a great change came over her. She was n't like the same girl. She used to be fond of birds and flowers, and had pets all over the place. Some of the horses would whinney when they would hear her voice, and she would put her arms around their necks and fondle them as if they were human. But all that stopped, and she seemed to have no more interest in any of them. I did n't want to speak to her mother about this; for she, poor woman, had enough trouble of her own; and then, as I have said, I thought Emma was fretted and worried about Will.

"One time I had to go to Helena. I hated awfully to go, for I felt things were not right; but it was the time of the year when I had to make that trip. So I went, and when I came back—I was gone about ten days—I found that Bodell had persuaded Emma to go off with him and get married. She was then just the age Zona is now. At first my wife and I were mortally distressed; but we made up our minds to do the best we could, and, as she was getting more feeble every day, I did n't want to make it any harder for her.

"Then Bodell began to show himself in his true colors. Knowing that I was helpless, he did about as he pleased. He would swear at Emma if she did n't do everything he wanted, no matter how much her mother needed her. More than half of his time he spent at the Four Corners, coming home some nights so drunk he could n't stand on his feet. And so things went on from bad to worse, when at last my poor wife died. But at the funeral he was n't sober enough to be in the room with Emma and me, and had to stay upstairs, or he'd have made an exhibition of himself. That ended the business for me. Next day I told him to get out. He stormed and swore, and threatened all sorts of things, upon which I let him look at my revolver, which quieted him right off. Then I told him that he was a black-leg, a cowardly drunkard; that he had led my boy to his ruin, and forced my girl to marry him, and that the next time I saw him, no matter when it was, I'd shoot him stone dead. He saw, then, that the game was up—and like all of his class he is an arrant coward—so he went away, leaving Emma with me. She would n't have gone with him anyhow, for she had come to have a horror of him.

"I heard nothing of Bodell for a long while; then I saw in an Helena paper that he had been in a street-fight and was terribly hurt. The next paper I got from Helena said he had died in the hospital. Emma saw this paper, though I did n't mean she should, and within twelve hours after

that Zona was born. Some weeks later I learned it was not Bodell who died, but another man who was in that same row. But I never told Emma. What was the use? I knew she would never go back to him, and I knew he'd never come after her while I lived.

"You see now why I hate Bodell. My son's death, my wife's broken heart, my daughter's ruined life, my own desolate home, I lay at his door, and if I ever get a chance I will kill him as I would a snake.

If Hank had raised his voice, or shown any special excitement, Carlisle would have felt a sense of relief, but the low, almost whispered tones continued to the last. And this made the story all the more impressive. Reluctantly breaking upon the silence, for Carlisle felt the strain under which Hank had been during this sad recital, he said:

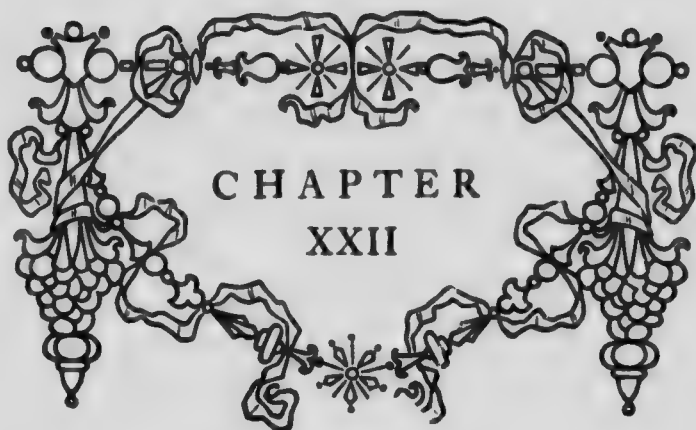
"Is Bodell aware he has a daughter, and that his wife is yet living?"

"Yes; but he does n't know where they are or even the name they bear. I gave up where I was, Emma and her baby coming with me. When we settled here, she took her mother's maiden name, Duncan, and people in these parts do n't bother one with questions. I do n't stage-drive for a living, but I wanted something to take up my mind. I am not so poor as most people think; but I have lived all my life with horses, and they are the best friends I have. Once in so often Bodell hears from me, though in a roundabout way, as I do n't want him to know where we are.



But this Cutty Hunk business may bring us together. If so, it will be worse for him."

It was now long after midnight, so Hank and Carlisle, after a hearty handshake that conveyed something of what each man felt, parted to snatch a few hours of much-needed rest.



SOME one has said—and when a person is of such consequence as to have his sayings put in quotation-marks and handed down the generations, it is assumed that he has said something of merit—"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." But when a young man is closing up a well-earned vacation, every hour of which has been enjoyed to the full, it would be difficult indeed to persuade him that the end of such a holiday is better than the beginning.

But Stephen Derwent was something of a philosopher. He knew that on a certain day he would be expected at the Gotham Bank, and he knew also the penalty for any failure to report for duty. Stephen had learned that banks were not conducted as health resorts, and that philanthropy, as a distinct feature, was not prominent in their management. He therefore packed his bag, rolled up his umbrella, took down his overcoat from the hall rack, and went to the buggy where his father was waiting.

But the leave-taking among the Derwents was less serious this time than in former years, Stephen having stipulated that they were all to come and spend Christmas with him. Still Mrs. Derwent's eyes were not quite guiltless of tears as he turned to go away, and even saucy Ruth had a look on her face not often found there.

But all of Ruth's sorrow was not on account of Stephen. Tremaine had something to do with it; for he also was going away, having arranged to meet Stephen at the station.

The dear little Ruth, with her sweet face and bright ways, was beginning to learn that strangest yet deepest lesson of life--love, after all, is but another name for pain; for love means suffering. The divinest love that this world ever knew reached its supreme glory on a cross; and the love which shrinks from suffering is a brutal, selfish thing, masquerading under a name which it degrades and profanes. And yet, so wondrous are the workings of the human heart, Ruth would willingly have given up almost everything of life rather than go back to the happy unconsciousness of a few months before.

What Tremaine had said to her during the last few days of his stay in Ridgeburg, we are not privileged to know. For they were spoken softly and in a tone intended only for Ruth. But whatever they were, they meant everything to her, and upon them her whole life now centered. As for Tremaine, he kept his own counsel; but Ridgeburg meant more to him than ever before.

Mr. Warriston and Eleanor were exceedingly sorry to have the young men go. They seemed like a part of their former life, and, though not in the immediate circle of their New York friends, yet they had some knowledge of them, and formed a link which connected them with happier days.

On their way to the station, Mr. Derwent spoke of the Warristons.

"I believe," he said, "James Bodell has had something to do with their coming to Ridgeburg."

"The Squire's son?" Stephen replied, with a wondering look at his father.

"Yes, the Squire's son," Mr. Derwent repeated, giving the horse a flick with the reins, though there was no need of it.

"What makes you think so?" Stephen asked, the look of wonder remaining on his face, for he had not once connected the Warristons with Bodell.

"Nothing directly, but a good deal indirectly," was Mr. Derwent's reply, again using the reins, and with even less cause than before.

This reply did not fully meet Stephen's question. He therefore waited for his father say something more. After a few moments, Mr. Derwent said:

"Mr. Warriston and I have come to be pretty well acquainted, and we have talked about some of our Ridgeburg people. This was only natural, he being a stranger, so I would tell him about one family and then another. One evening I said something about Squire Bodell; but the words

were hardly out of my mouth before a sort of spasm came upon him. I pretended not to notice anything—sick people, you know, are often very sensitive—and, it being dusk at the time, he thought I had n't noticed anything. But I tell you, Stephen, the look on Mr. Warriston's face was something awful."

Once more the reins dropped abruptly on the horse's flanks; but as this was evidently a habit of Mr. Derwent, the horse paid no attention to it, beyond a swish of its tail.

"Another time I made some remark about the Squire being sick. I really did n't mean to speak of him again, but it slipped out, as things will, and I could n't but see how both Mr. Warriston and his daughter were affected by it. And the other evening he asked me if the Squire had a son, and what was his name."

"I have met a Mr. Bodell in New York; he comes occasionally into the bank; but I never thought of him as the Squire's son."

"I'm not surprised, for it's a good many years since James Bodell left Ridgeburg. Some of the people here do n't even know that the Squire has a son. What is the New York man like?"

"He is tall, almost dark enough to pass for a Cuban, with piercing black eyes, and in a general way would be called handsome."

"And how old would you think?"

"I would guess about forty."

"Not a bad guess, either. The Squire's son is somewhere near that age, and your descrip-

tion tallies with what I remember of him. The first time he comes to the bank give him a close look, and write me if you notice anything special. And let me give you a word of advice, though I do n't think you much need it: if you have reason to think he is the Squire's son, beware of him; for a more artful, plausible villain does n't live on the Lord's earth."

The flick of the reins this time was more than a gesture, and the horse knew it, for he gave a jerk forward which indicated a measure of resentment.

"But now," said Mr. Derwent, turning to Stephen, "I have another matter to speak of. Things, you know, have been going nicely at the farm, and we have got ahead somewhat. It is n't much as compared with some other folks, but it's considerable for us. I have talked this over with your mother, and we think you had better buy a United States bond. The interest is n't much, but it's sure; then I always feel, when a man has a Government bond, that he is an owner of the concern down there in Washington. So,"—here Mr. Derwent looked carefully up and down the road to see if any one was in sight. Having convinced himself that they had the road to themselves, he slowly unbuttoned his coat, Stephen meanwhile holding the reins. Then he reached to an inside pocket of his vest, from which he took a package carefully done up in brown paper. "Here," he said, "is a thousand dollars. Get a bond of some kind; you know more about these

things than I do. I thought it best to have this in even money, but if there is any extra needed, let me know."

"Why, father," Stephen said, as he took the money, "you are on the way to become a bloated bondholder. Think of it! You must be careful not to let your wealth be discovered, or the Socialists will be after you."

"Like enough," Mr. Derwent said, settling back in the buggy; for having had his say about James Bodell, and also disposing of the money, his mind was at peace. "We have some Socialists round these parts, and a smart lot they are. You remember Jake Cobb, the lazy, good-for-nothing mason—he's one. He drinks most of the time, loafes when he is n't drinking, makes his wife just about support him, and while she is keeping a roof over his head by doing the neighbors' washing, he is spouting Socialism. And we have some others 'most as bad as Jake. But it's pretty hard to please every one nowadays. If a man is a little bit careful, and lays up something against a rainy day, he is called a mean, niggardly miser; and then, if he spends all that comes, people say he is reckless and extravagant, and by rights should die in the poorhouse. I tell you, Stephen, them Adam and Eve sermons of Mr. Tremaine were eye-openers to a good many people in this town. I never thought there was so much in that apple story."

"Ruth, though, seems to be the apple Tremaine is after," Stephen said, in a pleasant way.

"True enough," replied Mr. Derwent, and not without a measure of sadness; for the thought of parting from his little Ruth was far from pleasant to him; "but there are some apples to which a man has a right; in fact, they were planted for him. Now, Tremaine, if I am any judge, is a bright, honest, straight-up-and-down man, just the man for Ruth, and I mean that bond which you are going to buy to help them start housekeeping. But the trouble is when folks want apples that were n't planted for them. I know two men in Ridgeburg who do n't want ever to see or hear Mr. Tremaine again," and a shrewd smile lighted up Mr. Derwent's face as he made this remark.

"Only two! I thought the saints as a body repudiated him utterly."

Stephen had a vivid memory of some Ridgeburg saints. One man was so sour of visage that Ruth and Stephen spoke of him as "the walking pickle." Another one had such a sepulchral smile that Ruth said it was "like a gleam of sunshine on a coffin-lid." Another one assumed such penitential airs that they dubbed him the "litany in shoes." One dear sister had such severe notions that she would n't use visiting cards, as "the very name of cards was enough for her."

The terrible solemnities which Stephen had to endure from some self-canonized Ridgeburg saints yet remained. Hence, when his father spoke of two men to whom Mr. Tremaine's ministry was not a supreme joy, he had no difficulty in recalling several others of the same type.



"The two large-hearted and generous brethren to whom I refer," Mr. Derwent said, the dry, shrewd smile deepening on his face, "are Deacon Tompkins and Josiah Higgins."

Mr. Derwent rarely indulged in sarcasm. He usually said what he had to say in a plain, homely way, leaving each word to stand for itself. But men of the Tompkins and Higgins type were so repugnant to him that his ordinary form of discourse failed to meet his mental necessities. Ruth and Stephen not infrequently referred to these sanctimonious humbugs under the firm name of Fraud and Frump.

So carefully had Mr. Derwent timed his horse that there were but a few minutes to wait at the Foxvale Station. The platform good-byes were therefore short, almost, indeed, to the point of abruptness. And better so. Men, as a rule, are incapable of high, spectacular emotionalism. These men, therefore, merely shook hands; then the one went back to his buggy, and the other took his place in the train.

But if any one had followed that buggy, observing it particularly at a certain bend in the road, he would have seen the man in it take a handkerchief from his pocket, and carefully wipe his eyes. Nor was it dust he wiped away. And yet, when that same buggy reached Ridgeburg, no one would ever have suspected the incident of the handkerchief. Which goes to prove, with various other things, that the man who has a heart never wears it on his coat-sleeve.



ONE evening, taking advantage of his wife's absence, who had gone to visit her mother, Mr. Strathford spent some hours in a careful study of his financial concerns. He had intended doing this before, for matters were becoming serious, but kept putting it off, hoping that something might turn up which would relieve the situation. But nothing turned up. It seldom does. When a man does n't want money, he can have it by the pocketful; but when he does want it, he could more easily find a double set of hen's-teeth.

And then—for trouble is a most companionable fellow, and fairly revels in company of its own kind—certain little estates of which Mr. Strathford was trustee, and a couple of concerns to which he had been appointed receiver, were fast approaching settlement, when he would be expected to present satisfactory statements. Never before had he felt the stress of financial embarrassment. It was a quiet boast of his that no man ever asked him the second time for money which

he owed; and small sympathy men received from him when they came to ask for renewals or extensions. Sometimes, when the directors of the Gotham would vote to carry certain men along, he was stirred to the point of anger.

"Terribly strict fellow Strathford is," some of the directors would say, after their meetings, when they were speaking among themselves.

"Too strict altogether," Mr. Wamphrey impatiently remarked; "every one is n't as well fixed as he is."

"But no man could be more honest," they would all say, by way of extenuation.

With apparent unconcern he had asked Mrs. Strathford for her personal accounts, as well as those relating to the home, saying, in a pleasant way, it was best to balance up once in so often. Smilingly she complied with his request, and wrote to the different establishments where she had accounts, asking them to forward statements for immediate settlement. But when the bills came in, Mr. Strathford was simply overwhelmed. He could scarcely believe his eyes. He knew that Mrs. Strathford had entertained generously during the year, and also that she had gowned herself quite handsomely for a number of special functions, but it never occurred to him that the expense would be of such proportions. To meet all these demands he had practically nothing but his salary; for in arranging to secure a large holding of the new Cutty Hunk stock, he had drawn heavily upon his other resources.

In this emergency there was just one thing to do—tell Mrs. Strathford exactly how matters stood, show her the figures in black and white, state plainly his own condition financially, and then let them come to an understanding as to what had better be done. But how could he do this? Socially, his wife was well connected. By right of family she had entrance to almost any circle in the city. To deprive her of the enjoyments for which she had such exquisite adjustments would mean that he had deceived her and virtually entrapped her into a marriage under false pretenses. To confess to Mrs. Strathford that he was practically dependent on his salary as bank cashier, and that her dreams of social leadership were at an end, was a humiliation to which he would not descend, cost what it would.

Then his own pride came to the fore. The men at whose tables he had sat and with whom he had associated on equal terms would speak of him as a vulgar, presuming fellow, not much better than a common adventurer. So he drew down the cover of the desk which he kept in his own room, and determined to fight the thing out, no matter how it was done.

Hardly had the lock snapped in the desk before a servant came with Mr. Bodell's card. Mr. Bodell had an appointment with Mr. Strathford, one made that morning at the bank. There were some matters connected with Cutty Hunk, regarding which Mr. Strathford desired to consult Mr. Bodell. Lengthened conversation in the

bank was impossible, and as Mr. Bodell had dropped some significant hints relative to Cutty Hunk, a meeting was arranged for at the cashier's home.

"I see you allow smoking in your den," Bodell said, after the usual greetings, his glance indicating a box of cigars on the top of the desk.

"Yes, I indulge here," Strathford replied, reaching for the cigars and passing them to Bodell.

"I had a letter this morning," Bodell said, a few minutes later, taking out a letter-book from his pocket, "which will interest you. Suppose I read a few extracts, and then we can talk it over."

"I am at your service," said Strathford.

"This is from a man who knows as much about mining as I do," Bodell remarked, meaningly, and smiling in that peculiar way of his which caused his white teeth to show prominently. People who did n't like him said he smiled like a wolf. Of this, however, there is no certainty; for most of those who have seen a wolf smile are not living to describe it.

"Then you know something about mining?"

As Mr. Strathford said this, he carefully removed the ash from his cigar, depositing it on a little bronze tray, which he pushed along the table towards Bodell.

"Rather," answered Bodell, smiling more definitely than before. "Ten years in mining countries, two or three of them in this very region," tapping the letter with his fingers, "have given me a fair experience."

"Then, if your correspondent knows as much as you do, his letter should be of interest."

"So I thought. Hear what he says: 'Cutty Hunk is rich. The last assays run over sixty-nine per cent copper. The deeper we get, the richer the ore. All that is needed is depth, for there is ore in abundance below.' Then he goes on to say: 'Other claims are all looking good, but we are only working the richest ones.' There is a lot more about smelters and new machinery, but it means the same thing."

Mr. Bodell put the letter back in its envelope, then replaced it in the letter-book, finally putting it in his coat pocket. Evidently he attached much importance to it. And he had good reasons, for there were portions of that letter of special value. One brief sentence, underscored, read: "*Unless you have definite control of the original Cutty Hunk, you might as well give up the whole business. Everything depends on this.*" Another extract was also underscored: "*The superintendent, Grey, is not with us. I offered him big money, but it was no use. He knows some things about Cutty Hunk which I am afraid you do n't know.*"

But when one is reading a letter, and certain portions of it are marked confidential, to read such portions aloud in the presence of other parties would be a base betrayal of sacred trust! Hence the highly honorable Mr. Bodell gave Mr. Strathford only such extracts from this letter as did not violate the faith of his correspondent.

Another sentence, though not underscored,

was marked "special." "What you do, must be done quickly. Grey seems to be hand-in-glove with Hank Dobbins, the San Gabriel stage-driver. I have tried two or three schemes with Dobbins, but he fooled me every time. I do n't think Dobbins is his real name, but he is as wary as a fox. He brought three men from San Gabriel two weeks ago; and they are as wary as himself. I think the jig is up."

"I have arranged for a large holding of Cutty Hunk," Mr. Strathford said, after Bodell had put the letter away, "more than is my share. Indeed, I was thinking of letting some of it go, as I need the money for other things," and with something like a sigh he unconsciously turned to the desk under whose cover lay a heap of unpaid bills.

"Sell your Cutty Hunk?" Bodell said, incredulously. "In three months from now your stock will be worth a fortune."

"You have great faith in Cutty Hunk," the other replied.

"Faith! Why, sir, it is one of the biggest things New York ever heard of. My special reason in coming here to-night was that I might arrange with you for some more of the stock. Unfortunately I am not favored as you and Mr. Wamphrey with a bank to draw on. But I am buying all I can. I heard to-day of some Cutty Hunk I want to get. The man who took it we both know, but no names must be used. He got knocked out the other day in a deal, so his Cutty Hunk is on the private market. He is trying to

hold it, but gave me an option, and I will get it somehow. I do n't want any one to know of this; but I will go shares with you if we can make an arrangement."

"I don't think I can take any more," Mr. Strathford said, regretfully.

Bodell's enthusiastic confidence in Cutty Hunk was having its effect upon the embarrassed cashier. If things turned out as they promised, his difficulties would dispose of themselves: Another thousand shares bought now, before they reached the regular market, would mean handsome returns before long. But where could he find the money?

"I ought to say," Bodell remarked in a careless way, "my plan is to hold this extra stock only a few weeks. Early in the season I expect to use a few thousand dollars for a special purpose. I thought of keeping this stock, perhaps a month, then let it go, meantime having made a big thing of it."

Mr. Strathford could easily postpone most of his payments a month. Why not accept Bodell's proposition? A few thousand dollars secured so easily would straighten matters out wonderfully. The bills under that desk-cover could then be paid. There would be no need of humiliating either Mrs. Strathford or himself. He might have to borrow from the bank, but who need know of this?

Mr. Bodell then rose to go. Having made the offer to Mr. Strathford, he had no reason for remaining. But more than once his keen, piercing

eyes had flashed a searching glance at Mr. Strathford, though the cashier was not aware of it. When they parted in the hall, Mr. Strathford said:

"Come to the bank to-morrow. Perhaps I can arrange this matter."

It was almost eleven o'clock when Bodell reached the "Old King Cole," a club of which he was a prominent member. He went at once to the writing-room, where he wrote a short note, sending it by special messenger. And this was what he wrote:

"DEAR NOEL,—The mouse has had a smell of the cheese, and likes it. To-morrow morning I expect to spring the trap. Have that stuff ready.
"J. B."

This disposed of, Bodell went into the main parlor, where a score or more of the King Colers were supposed to be amusing themselves. These amusements, though, were not distinctly intellectual, consisting chiefly of drinking, card-playing, looking at pictures in the comic papers, while here and there were little groups whose noble minds wrestled with such absorbing problems as the winner in an impending prize-fight, or the most shapely figure in a new company of ballet-dancers. No wonder that most of these men had expansive foreheads, in some cases extending to the nape of the neck; for when a man gives his whole time to such absorbing themes, small surprise if he grows prematurely bald. Others, again, had crow's-feet, not under their eyes merely, but far

more generously diffused. Still, how can a man keep up with the latest crease in trousers or the newest wrinkle in hats without these stupendous efforts of thought being reproduced in himself?

In all truth, the King Colers were not the highest types of athletic manhood. Most of them suggested Chippendale furniture—spindle legged, wasp-waisted things—with this difference, however, they were not graceful, nor pleasant to look at. Some of them wore very high collars, on the top of which rested a vacuous head, into whose echoless space a sensible idea had never yet penetrated. Two or three essayed evening dress, coming in late and hurriedly, as if they had torn themselves away from some crush or function uptown. This pleasing little fiction deceived no one, as it was generally known that the suits were hired, and the wearers little above the rank of counter-jumpers. In one corner a member was trying to tell a funny story; but having imbibed in quantity, the narrative lost something of its meaning by hiccoughs and gestures through which it slowly made its way.

Bodell was a great favorite here. He had held every office that the King Colers could give, his election always being by acclamation. This being his first visit since returning to town, he had a regular ovation.

"Boys," he said, to a group who were standing about him after the greetings had subsided, "I went up the river with a Pilgrim father."

"Then you dropped him overboard," one said.

"Run him into Sing Sing, perhaps," another remarked.

"Both wrong. We went as far as Albany."

"A Pilgrim father in Albany! We must have proofs," said one of the noble-browed youths, whose head had to be content with a rim of closely-cropped hair.

"Yes, and I parted with him there," Bodell answered, smiling in such a way as to show his gleaming teeth.

"You'd gladly have parted with him before, I'll be bound," said one of the Chippendale members, for a moment lifting his eyes from the rapt contemplation of his own feet, which were encased in patent-leather shoes.

"Moreover, we had much pious conversation on the way," Bodell continued, with a still more prominent smile.

"Say, Bodell, you set them up for the crowd. That's the champion whopper," hiccupped the imbiber.

"He talked of Adam and Eve, and made a regular sermon out of the apple," Bodell went on.

"You mean he talked of Adam, and you thought of Eve," came from a head on the top of a high collar.

This remark created much enthusiasm. Two or three men shouted, "Good!" "Good!" "Give us another!" while the heavy imbiber in sheer ecstasy flung his arms around the neck of the brilliant youth whose mighty intellect had evolved this sublime production.

"No; I thought of the apple," said Bodell.

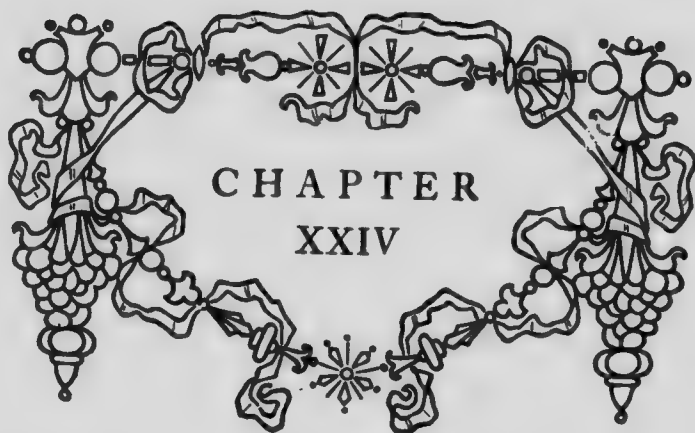
"Same thing," replied one of the young men in evening dress, whose face had that magnificent vacuity which suggests the infinite. This called out another chorus of approval in which all present joined.

"What did you say to the Pilgrim father?" asked a man, much of the Bodell pattern.

"Fell back on the syllogism: apples were made to be eaten; I was made to eat apples, therefore—"

"The Pilgrim father preferred to remain in Albany rather than travel any farther with you," the same man remarked.

How the Chippendales applauded! How the broad foreheads wrinkled in laughter! Then more bottles were opened, more songs were sung, more stories were told, Bodell the leader and moving spirit of the club.



WHEN Squire Bodell, after hearing Nat Sykes speak of the Warristons, and more particularly of Miss Warriston, expressed a desire to meet the new tenants of the Libby cottage, it did not occur to him that Sykes would accept him literally. But the worthy Nat, with rare promptness, proceeded to convert the Squire's wish into words, and then deliver those words in person. It was in the early evening when he called at the Libby cottage, and, never having met Miss Warriston ceremoniously, an introduction seemed essential.

"Be you Miss Warriston?" he inquired, as Eleanor opened the door in response to his energetic pull of the bell.

"I am," she answered, with a little smile of recognition, for she had seen Nat at Tibbett's store, and knew he lived somewhere in Ridgeburg.

"I'd like to speak with you, if I may," Nat said, giving his hat-rim a tug.

"Certainly," was the reply; "won't you come in?"

"I be Squire Bodell's man, an' he'd like to see you. The Squire's been powerful sick. He'd like very much to see you any time you kin come." Nat spoke hurriedly, still standing at the door; for he was so much absorbed in his message that he did not hear Miss Warriston's invitation to come in.

"Squire Bodell wishes to see me?" Eleanor asked, in surprise.

"Yes 'm. He's said so a number of times. An' as the Squire's very sick, I guessed p'raps you'd come."

As Nat said this he gave another tug at his hat-rim. As the hat and the rim had hardly been on speaking terms for some time, this second tug strained it beyond endurance, so it parted from the hat right across his forehead, where it hung down like a piece of face armor worn by valiant knights centuries ago.

"Are you sure of this? Is there not some mistake?" Miss Warriston asked, even more eagerly than before.

"Yes 'm. No mistake. 'T is you he's spoken of lots of times, an' wishes you'd come soon."

"But why should Squire Bodell wish to see me? I never saw him, and we are utter strangers to each other. You must be mistaken."

The look of curiosity with which Eleanor first greeted Nat had now disappeared, and in its stead an expression of complete bewilderment had come.

"It's just as I've said," Nat persisted. "Squire wants to see you, for you be Miss Warriston, an' it's Miss Warriston he's asked for."

This certainly seemed conclusive. But what did it mean? A sick man's request was not to be denied lightly; but why had he sent for her?

"An' he wishes you'd come soon," Nat said, breaking in upon her unspoken questions; "he's got somethin' on his mind he wants to see you for."

Nat had no reason for saying this. Knowing that the Warristons were from New York, the Squire naturally felt a desire to see them, but beyond that had not said a word. But so unconsciously are we controlled by forces beyond ourselves that we, in furthering our own plans, become parts of other plans infinitely larger. Nat's little circle of desire for the Squire to meet Miss Warriston was soon absorbed by the greater circle of manifest destiny.

After Nat had gone with her promise to call at the Squire's the next day, Eleanor was disposed to tell her father of the strange message Nat had brought, but concluded, finally, not to say anything lest he might be anxious and distressed.

There was more than a suggestion of autumn in the air that afternoon when Miss Warriston set out on her strange errand; for October had really come, clear, crisp, and beautiful. The light wind had just sting enough to make the blood leap with life, and send it bounding through the veins, as a spirited horse touched gently with a spur. In a tightly-fitting suit of dark-gray tweed,

which set off her lithe, graceful figure; in a felt Alpine hat, with just curl enough in the brim to make it singularly becoming; a grayish feather boa, hung loosely around her neck; her shapely hands daintily gloved, and walking rapidly along the Ridgeburg Road,—it need excite no surprise if more than one admiring glance followed her on the way. The bracing air gave a slight tinge to her cheeks; the clear bright sky repeated itself in her eyes; and though her face was thoughtful, more so even than usual, it seemed to bear an expression of splendid fearlessness.

The leaves had fallen heavily during these October days, both the road and pathway being strewn with them; yet the trees were far from bare, and, clad in glowing foliage, rustled and shimmered in the afternoon sun. From the fields nearly everything had been gathered; for in Ridgeburg winter comes early, and the frosts have a bite which few things can resist. Eleanor felt nothing of that melancholy which so many associate with autumn. It seemed to her as if the earth, like a great, strong man after his day of earnest toil, was taking a breathing-spell in the hush of eventide, preparatory to a season of deep, healthy sleep.

But her eyes could not be limited to the hills which rose in the distance, nor her thoughts restrained by the trees rustling overhead. The errand upon which she was going had aroused many emotions and started up memories that were a part of her life. She thought of Robert—brave,

kindly, ingenuous—over whom her heart yearned with a love almost as that of a mother. Then came memories of her early home, once as peaceful as the fields upon which the golden sunlight was falling so gratefully. Neither did she forget Carlisle, the strong, patient man, who accepted so bravely the strange burden which had been put upon him.

From the Libby cottage to Squire Bodell's, as measured by the road, the distance was perhaps a mile, but when one is walking rapidly and thinking eagerly a mile does not seem long. It was, therefore, with a feeling of surprise Eleanor found herself at the gate from which the walk led to the front door.

It was a large house, and in former years must have been both attractive and imposing. There was a Colonial cast in its architecture, the columns and porticoes attesting to the original design. It stood in the midst of ample grounds, with noble trees rising here and there; shrubbery in all forms and varieties abounded; outlines of what were once large flower-beds were plainly visible; but everything was unkempt, disordered, tangled; weeds and flowers hopelessly interblended; the shrubs were untrimmed, the grass was coarse and tufty, even the trees were straggly and broken. All these things, and much more, Eleanor saw as she walked up the circular path; nor did she fail to observe that the path itself was jagged and uneven, with tufts of grass here and there sprawling across it.

The door was opened by a grim-looking female

of the cookstove persuasion, whose hands and face bore the marks of her unceasing warfare with pots and pans. Nat had probably spoken to her of the unexpected visitor, for she manifested no surprise at seeing Miss Warriston. Nevertheless, she looked at her carefully before letting her in, even continuing the scrutiny as she went to the foot of the broad staircase to call Sykes. Her voice was not sweet, but it possessed what is known among musicians as the "carrying quality." Then, she had a way of making what singers speak of as the "attack," and, as Sykes is a phrase capable of erudition on the upper register, she pronounced his name with a thrilling effect. The stairs being guiltless of carpet, and Sykes wearing shoes of stalwart proportions, his coming was announced considerably in advance. The grim female, however, remained standing sideways to the stairs, her head poised as if listening to the echoes of her own voice, yet all the while watching Miss Warriston, who stood near the door.

"The Squire be very glad to see you, Mis' Warriston," Sykes said, as he conducted Eleanor upstairs. "He's some easier to-day, an' is much pleased you's come so soon."

The stairs circled in easy, pleasant steps, leading to the room where Mr. Tremaine had been a few weeks before. The Squire was seated in his big arm-chair, and, though not so deathly pale as when Mr. Tremaine had visited him, he fully justified Nat Sykes in describing him as a very sick man. But there was more of life in his

voice as he thanked Eleanor for calling, even faintly smiling as he said:

"I am sure you will excuse the request of an invalid; but hearing you were from New York, I greatly desired to see you."

While he was speaking, Eleanor looked at him, and saw in his face, though deeply lined with sickness and pain, the outlines of another face with which she had reason to be sadly familiar. At first the likeness was not very distinct; for the face before her was almost bloodless, the eyes were hidden by heavy brows, white hair, irregular and shaggy, covered the head as well as much of the face; whereas the other face, which so fearfully haunted her, was dark, the eyes were prominent, and the hair black as night, yet before the Squire had ended his greeting she saw in him the father of James Bodell.

Her first feeling was that of aversion; indeed, she felt horror-stricken. But though possessing a keen sense of justice and deeply conscious of the wrong that had been done, she made a heroic effort to put aside her own feelings for the time, and, being a woman of rare tact, she succeeded admirably, the Squire never once dreaming of the storm of passion that was raging in her soul. Between the pauses in their conversation—for the Squire's speech would at times almost fail him, as when he talked with Tremaine—she could hear again the mocking words: "Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now." Then the dark, cruel face would

appear as she had seen it so often. The Squire asked all manner of questions about New York, listening with deep interest to her replies. After a time the Squire said, somewhat abruptly:

"I have a son in New York. Perhaps you have met him?"

This was the question Eleanor had been expecting, though fearing; and now that it had come, how was she to answer it? But anything like evasion or subterfuge was contrary to her nature. She therefore answered:

"We have met a Mr. Bodell in New York, and, from his likeness to you, I believe he is your son."

Something in her tone caused the Squire to glance quickly at Eleanor. She had not intended that any feeling should betray itself; but she had suffered so much that, unconsciously, her voice expressed intense pain. Then, resting his head wearily against the side of his chair, the Squire looked at Eleanor with strange intentness. His eyes had a light almost supernatural. They seemed to reach the depths of her soul.

For some time not a word was spoken, the silence broken only by the clock as the big pendulum swung its measured stroke. But in that silence these two souls were speaking with each other. For the time each had put aside its habitation of clay, and entered upon the realm of spiritual illumination. As a prisoner with file of steel cuts his way through bolts and bars, forcing his passage to liberty, so suffering had wrought upon the physical sense of the Squire and Eleanor

breaking the bondage under which their spirits had been held in thrall.

"I was not aware of this when I sent for you, Miss Warriston," the Squire said, speaking in a low, heart-broken voice; "but now that you are here, tell me of your trouble."

"O, I can not," Eleanor said, piteously, her heart going out with wondrous tenderness to the Squire, whose life had been so ruthlessly despoiled.

"Can you forgive?" asked the Squire, with a solemnity like the tolling of a bell at the midnight hour.

He remembered the words of Tremaine, spoken in this same room a few weeks before. He remembered also his own agonies of soul when he sought to apply the test to himself. Eleanor was startled by the Squire's question. Could she forgive?

She had never asked herself that question. Indeed, the thought of forgiveness had not entered her mind. Anger, indignation, a burning sense of wrong, outraged justice, fierce hatred, all of these she had felt again and again, and there were times when the simple thought of James Bodell almost maddened her, so bitterly did she resent his cruelty and deception.

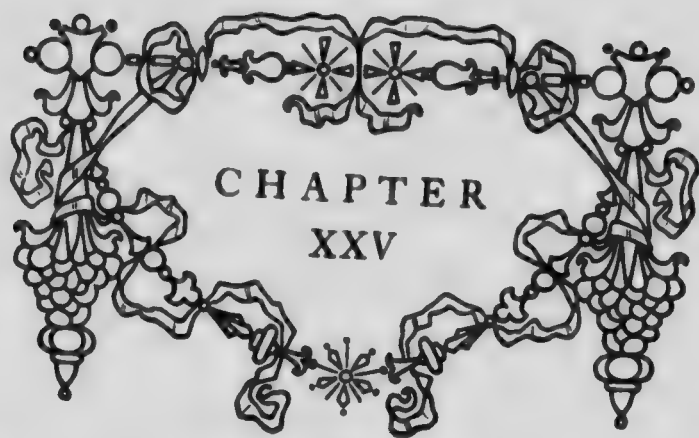
"Can you forgive?" The question came upon her as a shock, and, being asked by a dying man, it seemed as a voice from the valley and shadow of death.

But the Squire did not repeat the question; neither did he wait for a reply.

Soon they spoke of other things, but briefly, for October afternoons are short, and the mile walk remained to the Libby cottage.

"You will come again, and soon?" the Squire wistfully asked, as she stood up to leave.

As she promised, there was a grateful smile on his wan face, a smile which she remembered for many days after.



MRS. DEVERAL, whose massive intellect had so generously diffused itself at Saratoga, kindly accepted invitation, heartily tendered by herself, to spend a few weeks in New York as the guest of Mr. Maitland. It is true that Mrs. Deveral's self-given invitation was not promptly or cordially taken up by Mrs. Maitland, for she did not even reply to the letter containing it; but with that noble disregard of trammeling proprieties characteristic of the true reformer, Mrs. Deveral drove up to the house of her friend and disciple, confident of a joyous welcome.

It so happened that Mrs. Maitland was not at home when Mrs. Deveral arrived, though Mr. Maitland was; but he, for some reason, declined to see her. But was she daunted, even when told that Mrs. Maitland was out, and Mr. Maitland particularly engaged? A woman less heroic, or one actuated by motives not so exalted, would have ordered the hackman to take her somewhere else. But Mrs. Deveral lived in an atmosphere

so far removed from common things that she quietly entered Mrs. Maitland's parlor, though not before she had seen her trunk carried from the hack and given a place of prominence in the hall.

And even when Mr. Maitland came into the hall a few minutes later, and made certain profane remarks about that trunk, asking angrily to whom it belonged and why it had been taken in, though both his remarks and questions were distinctly audible to Mrs. Deveral, yet with such serenity did she maintain her affluent soul that she sat calm and undisturbed in an easy-chair, waiting for Mrs. Maitland to return.

Why should a woman of her splendid gifts be affected by such trifles? Who was Mr. Maitland anyhow, and what were his profane remarks and vulgar questions but the expressions of a low, common mind? To her thought he was nothing but a man, a two-legged, two-armed, two-eyed creature; a thing who presumed to vote, to make money; but in the last analysis a man, and nothing more. She heard him go out, and even smiled when she listened to his slamming of the door, and his angry tread on the doorsteps. She did not, however, observe the look on Mrs. Maitland's face when that guileless creature entered the hall and saw the trunk; neither did she hear the whispered remark addressed to a servant, one with whom Mrs. Maitland was on confidential terms. But she did see a face lit up with smiles when it entered the parlor, and she also heard the voice of her self-constituted host.

"My dear Mrs. Deveral! How glad I am to see you! How good it was of you to come! So sorry I had to go out. Why didn't you let me know the train you were coming on, and I would have met you with the carriage?"

And so the sweet creature went on, removing, in her own graceful way, Mrs. Deveral's unwieldy bonnet, then assisting in taking off her wraps, and waiting on her in the most effusive way.

Being a prophetess, recognized in Boston as a superior being, and having a high place among the noble reformers of the age, Mrs. Deveral received the services of Mrs. Maitland as the right and due to which she was properly entitled, consenting, finally, to make the Maitland home her habitation while she remained in New York.

"Then you did n't receive my note?" she asked, when sufficiently mollified to indulge in common conversation.

"It must have got into Mr. Maitland's mail," was the reply. "You sent it—when?"

It did get into Mr. Maitland's mail, but not accidentally; and when he read it at the breakfast-table that morning, he made remarks somewhat inflammatory and picturesque.

"I can't see how that can be," Mrs. Deveral said, in tones expressive of positive unbelief.

"I must ask Mr. Maitland about it. Such mistakes are really provoking," Mrs. Maitland replied, in evident distress.

To this the Prophetess vouchsafed no answer. A great soul, accustomed to concentrate itself

upon the mysteries of undiscovered thought, could not descend to such trifles. Still her face did not possess that effulgent sense of rapture natural to a person of her degree; and no wonder, for just then she was bemoaning the hack hire which Mrs. Maitland had cost her by failing to send the carriage to the station.

For reasons, which in time would inure to her personal advantage, Mrs. Deveral was anxious to present her views to a New York gathering, and, having communicated this desire to Mrs. Maitland, that lady invited a number of friends to meet the eminent Prophetess. Mr. and Mrs. Strathford were honored with a special invitation, Mrs. Maitland taking pains to write a nice little note, sending it with the card. Mr. Aylesbury and Geneva were also favored in the same way.

A card was sent to Mr. Wamphrey, with a line scrawled at the bottom, which caused him to return an immediate acceptance. Mr. Bodell received his invitation in relays; the first by word of mouth from Mr. Maitland; the second in the usual form; the third a reminder—one of Mrs. Maitland's visiting cards, with the date written on it and marked "special."

Seeing Fred Westerhall on the street, and being short of men, Mrs. Maitland invited him. Fred had just returned from the West, a vacation trip he called it; but for one usually so talkative, he had very little to say of his summer outing.

Despite her efforts to secure a sprinkling of men, the female element overwhelmingly pre-



vailed at this gathering of Mrs. Maitland's. Nor was it the young female with the bright eyes, the healthy cheek, the fluffy hair, the fresh, sweet voice; it was the female antique, whose hair was patched and matched, whose eyes languished and anguished, whose cheeks stained and pained, whose voice quivered and shivered, who thronged in such numbers to meet the Prophetess.

After graciously receiving the personal homage of the assembled throng, later in the evening the Prophetess consented to speak of the mighty message with which she had been intrusted.

"We are now in the Universe of the Disembodied," she said, after having gradually led her sympathetic auditors to this mysterious condition. "We are all spirit; everything else is purely imaginary."

As a disembodied spirit Mrs. Deveral did not look alluring. Though out of doors it was tolerably cool, the parlors were hot, so hot as to be almost oppressive. Hence Mrs. Deveral perspired, and, having a face which shone with pronounced unctuousness, perspiration added nothing to its beauty. At first a fan diffused some relieving waves across the heroic countenance of the Prophetess; but that not meeting the necessities of the case, she was compelled to have recourse to a pocket handkerchief. So she mopped her expansive and liquidating face, and went on:

"This is not real," laying her hand upon her head, touching it gently, however; for there were some people base enough to insinuate that she

wore a wig. "Nor this," removing her hand from her head, and placing it upon her ample bosom, which rose and fell with asthmatic irregularity; for the room was now almost stifling.

Some of the antique maidens looked at each other in a conscious way; for though women, like poets, are born, not made, nevertheless some dressmakers could a bust unfold.

"This thing that we call a body is not real. It has no actual substance. We can imagine that we see it. But, in point of fact, it is immaterial as this," waving her ungloved, perspiring hand through the air.

The real Prophetess never wears gloves. Gloves are a base conformity to mere fashion, and therefore must be scorned. The fact that the average prophetess has fat, unwieldy hands, which gloves would only emphasize, should not be considered. And the other fact that the modern prophetess always inclines to showy rings, adorning every podgy finger she can, has nothing to do with the case. Fair-minded persons are content to know that a prophetess insists upon having hands which she can brandish in the way most effective and imposing.

Some may think that, in thus declaring herself, Mrs. Deveral was out of harmony with her famous protest, so eloquently made at Saratoga. But such was not the case. Above all things else, Mrs. Deveral possessed a logical mind. At Saratoga she protested against being born without her consent having been previously obtained; at

New York she logically followed up that protest by declaring she never had been born; and, as a sequence, repudiated the supposed body with which she had been dowried.

"Do I feel pain?" she asked, now rising from her chair and gazing with fine, frenzied eye upon the listening company. "I? I? I? I am incapable of pain. Pain is utterly unreal. It is a trick of the imagination, a weak, foolish delusion, to which many of you have basely subjected yourselves, but of which I know nothing, not even a thought."

If Fred Westerhall had been promised just then the wealth of Sheba's famous queen, he could not have refrained from something which sounded like a snicker; for he was absorbed in watching the movements of the big, brandishing hands, and he saw that another such gesture, now that Mrs. Deveral had moved to the side of her chair, would result in a decided contact with the sharp corner of the mantelpiece.

The Prophetess heard something of Fred's snicker, and it made her justly indignant. Honest opposition she looked for; indeed she rather courted it; for then she posed as a martyr, and sighed with thrilling effect. But a snicker! And a snicker from a man! No wonder an angry light blazed in her imaginary eyes, and the blood pulsed indignantly through her imaginary heart.

"I repeat it," she said, glaring at Fred, who had the grace to look conscious, but still intent upon the gesture which should accompany this

outburst, "pain is sin. Sin is phantasy. Phantasy is mental delirium. Mental delirium is delusion, and delusion is but the shadow of weakness and imbecility." •

Such phrases as these, one rising upon another in splendid gradation, called for proportionate dramatic effect. So the prophetic eyes flashed, the mighty bosom heaved, the streaming hands brandished, one of them striking the sharp corner of the mantelpiece with a force which caused the ornaments thereon to shiver and rattle in the most decided way.

But did the Prophetess pause in her mighty speech? She did. She paused abruptly. She did more, she came to a dead stop. Then she ceased glaring at Fred Westerhall, turning her anguished eyes upon her more anguished hand. For there was blood upon that hand, more blood than Lady Macbeth saw upon hers when she used certain unladylike expressions. Then the mighty bosom heaved once more, this time, not to fall in gentle movement, but to vent itself in a prolonged shriek, the like of which is seldom heard on either land or sea. The next moment everything and everybody was in confusion; for chairs, sofas, lounges, the maidens antique, the bewildered men, the still more bewildered women, were involved in chaos and distress. And small wonder; for in a ponderous heap on the floor lay the Prophetess in a state of supposed unconsciousness. In falling, her repudiated body struck the chair which she had so recently adorned. The chair having spindle legs,

and therefore unduly sensitive, resented this act of the Prophetess by falling right across her face. So there they lay, each disembodied and supremely unconscious one of the other.

Mrs. Maitland, knowing something of the treatment which the Prophetess herself would impose, suggested that they all resume their seats, and, having completely emptied their minds, look steadily at the ceiling for ten minutes, and, by concentration and subjugation, secure perfect recovery. Fred Westerhall, having a vague notion that he was in part responsible for the trouble, got a glass of water, and dashed some of it in the face of the wounded Prophetess. This partially revived her; but a woman of such proportions could not be expected to revive all at once. Mr. Bodell procured some brandy, which, after diluting slightly, he gave to the Prophetess, who imbibed it with apparent relish. Then, with the help of Mr. Strathford and Fred Westerhall, he carried her to her room, which, fortunately, was on the next floor. Concerning the reality of her body, these gentlemen had decided convictions. There was nothing specially ethereal in the form which they carried upstairs. The gratitude which they felt when relieved of their burden was plainly evident; and when they saw Mrs. Deveral deposited on a lounge, the springs of which creaked under her weight, a sigh of relief came from all three. And so the disembodied Prophetess, with her hand done up in bandages and her breath fragrant with brandy, was lulled into sweet repose.

This unfortunate accident caused an abrupt departure of most of the guests, a few chosen friends remaining, to condole with Mrs. Maitland. After the others had gone, in that sweet, cooing way of hers, Mrs. Maitland said:

"Now that we have heard of the nothingness of matter—also that food neither strengthens nor helps the body, and that gustatory pleasure is a sensuous illusion—it is, of course, useless for me to ask any of you into the supper-room; still, though you won't believe it, I am positively hungry."

"May I ask," said Fred Westerhall, "if the superior being, whose etherealized essence I had the felicity of assisting upstairs, carried out her own beautiful theories when in your dining-room?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Mrs. Maitland; "for there she 'demonstrates' that man shall not live by bread alone, but must have everything else within reach of the markets. Upon these she 'concentrates' her energies in a way that is simply wonderful. As a further proof of her consistency, she 'subjugates' all within her range, and in quantities of heroic proportions."

At the supper-table, to which they all laughingly adjourned, sundry remarks were made about Karma and Yoga and Dama, which afforded all of them much merriment.

Mr. Wamphrey managed, with Mrs. Maitland's help, to get seated beside Miss Aylesbury; but as she had Westerhall on the other side, the banker did not score heavily. Mrs. Strathford had to con-

tent herself with such attentions as Mr. Aylesbury could give; for both Mr. Strathford and Bodell remained standing in a corner of the room, talking over business matters.

"I called at the bank this morning," Bodell said, "but could not see you. I got your message, however."

"It was the best I could do," was Strathford's reply.

"That is all right," Bodell said, reassuringly. "The note secured the stock, and before the month is up, we can sell at a big advance."

"He does n't know anything?" Strathford asked, with an almost imperceptible movement of his head towards Mr. Aylesbury.

Bodell merely smiled. Strathford then did the same; and as each man's smile conveyed a great deal to the other man, the result was eminently satisfactory.

"If Wamphrey goes out, you go in," Bodell then said, referring to another matter which they both understood.

"Probably. I have a number of friends on the Board."

"No other arrangement is possible."

"Wamphrey may not go out."

"He will, and before a month."

"You are sure, then?"

"I have good reason to be."

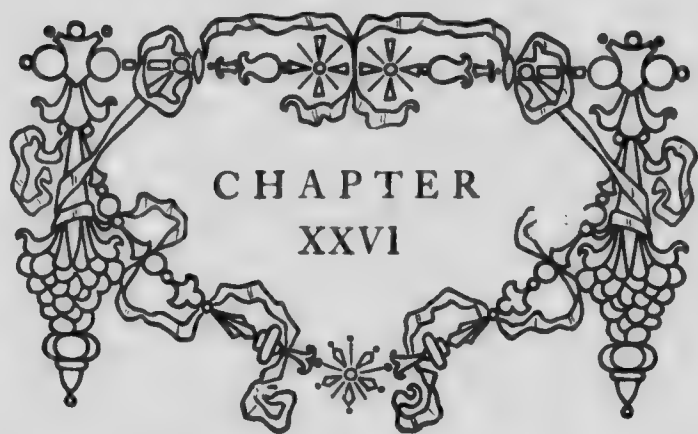
Upon this, Mrs. Maitland came over to where the two gentlemen were standing; so the conversation took another turn

After the company had broken up, which was about midnight, Mrs. Maitland opened a note received some hours before; but knowing it was from her husband, she deferred reading it till now. It was not a long letter; Mr. Maitland's letters seldom were, some of them being only a few lines.

"I found, this morning, on reaching the office, that some matters in London require my personal attention. I must therefore take to-day's steamer, and may not return for several weeks. Address letters and cables as before. B. M."

As the letter called for no reply, and not possessing much value either literary or otherwise, Mrs. Maitland can hardly be blamed if, after reading it, she twisted it around her fingers, and then threw it into a waste-paper receiver which was in the room.

There was a time when Mr. Maitland would not have so abruptly announced his departure for even a day, much less a trip across the sea. Some memory of this came to her; so she went to the waste-paper receiver, and, taking out Mr. Maitland's letter, untwisted it, smothered it between her hands, then locked it up in her desk. After this she went to Mrs. Deveral's room, opening the door softly, but the Prophetess was still fast asleep. She therefore came back to her own room, and, sitting down on a chair by the window, looked out in the direction of the sea. Mr. Maitland, meantime, was speeding across the Atlantic.



THE clerks in Mr. Carlisle's office manifested no special surprise when he came in one morning, and, after greeting them cordially, went over to his own desk. For a man who had been killed in a railroad accident, obituarized in the newspapers, and buried in an unknown grave, Mr. Carlisle looked remarkably well. He had a deeper color than in the early summer, and his appearance suggested good, healthy exercise in the open air.

Naturally Mr. Carlisle had many things to do on this particular morning, and, as Mr. Craig had been in charge during his absence, it seemed necessary that they should have much to say to each other.

Once in a while when Mr. Craig came out of Mr. Carlisle's office that forenoon, his little eyes had a peculiar gleam, and there were two or three times when he actually smiled. One of the clerks, whose desk was close to the private office, affirmed that he heard Mr. Craig laugh—a definite, posi-

tive laugh—but the other clerks unanimously refused to accept this as even possible.

At the other end of the suite of offices, in a little corner off by itself—a queer little corner, too, for it was made by the combination of two high desks and a Japanese screen—sat Mr. Dolphin. He heard the remark of the clerk in the other room, for it was spoken openly. But Mr. Dolphin said nothing. He rarely did. As a listener he had few equals. By common consent he could think more and speak less than any other clerk in the office. His name was not Dolphin, though among his associates he practically had no other. His father's name was Fish—a good, honest name, and not without recognition in New York annals. For some reason his mother, though a woman of average intelligence, insisted upon having him baptized Adolphus. But the combination proved too much for her unfortunate son. Though a fish is not of necessity a dolphin, a dolphin can not be anything but a fish. Dolphin in his case was simply inevitable. Even before he had completed his juvenile task of chewing rubber rings, acquiring thus early the noble art of mastication, people were calling him Dolphin. He “goo-goo'd” his earnest disapproval, but the “goo-goo's” were taken just the other way. Occasionally Mr. Carlisle would call him Fish, but generally he was known as Dolphin.

He had several marked peculiarities, some of which interfered with his worldly welfare, while others contributed to his social worth. There

were times when, using a form of speech familiar to his fellow clerks, he would "crook his little finger," to which task, at stated intervals, he devoted his entire energies. At such seasons he was absent from the office, his chair reminding one of a certain unplucked rose, left blooming alone. Then, having crooked his finger to such an extent that his money was all gone, also sundry articles, chiefly ornamental, loaned to an accommodating relative, he would return to his desk after a penitential interview with Mr. Craig. Finding that he had much time to make up, as well as his name to redeem, not to speak of other things which were in the care of his obliging uncle, Mr. Dolphin worked with a zeal eminently praiseworthy. So, to sum up the case, when Mr. Dolphin was crooking his little finger, his services to Mr. Carlisle were seemingly of little value; but when his little finger was not undergoing this process, he was worth his weight in gold.

Living with a widowed mother, who possessed some means of her own; having no wife to issue her dread mandates concerning his habits; devoted to Mr. Carlisle save at such times as have been referred to, Mr. Dolphin allowed the years to come and go at their own sweet will. For some reason he was partial to clerical attire, not such canonical garments as are affected by some young divines, but a black frock-coat well buttoned up to the chin, and a white necktie arranged bow-knot fashion. Rarely did he wear any other trousers than those of solid black, and almost invariably

he wore a high silk hat. Being smooth-faced, benevolent-looking, with a studious cast of features, the effect materially heightened by a pair of heavy gold spectacles, it was not surprising that Mr. Dolphin should be taken for a clergyman. But if any one imagined that he was an artless, simple-minded brother, intent only upon the concerns of another world, he usually found out, sooner or later, that Mr. Dolphin was not exactly that type of man. Mr. Craig had known him for years, and, when opportunity presented, gave him a place in the office. And he often consulted with him, going so far, at times, as to follow his judgment, even when his own did not accord with it.

In some way he became acquainted with a Mr. Carter, a gentleman who, when under certain influences, referred to himself as an "ink-slinger for the firm of Stennett & Bodell." This acquaintance was probably brought about through finger-crooking, a practice to which Mr. Carter had distinct proclivities.

Mr. Carter, though of secretive mind, had never fully realized that when the wine is in, the wit is out. Hence there were times when he opened his mouth, not merely to swallow certain liquors, but to say things not best for him to say. To most of these things Mr. Dolphin listened carefully. Nor did he fail to recall them when necessary. At such times as he was in the convivial fellowship of Mr. Carter and others of his class, he never arrayed himself in professional garb, but assumed a costume so opposite in every way that he was

usually taken for a country sport or a discarded jockey, everything about him suggesting horses and stables. Mr. Carter, on the other hand, never failed to impress his auditors with the fact of his connection with the eminent firm of Stennett & Bodell, intimating at times that he was a partner. "Yes, and not a sleeping one either," he said one night in "The Den," a resort of the bibulously disposed.

That night Mr. Carter had bibulated with much profuseness; so he talked considerably in a stupid, boastful way.

"Bet yer life on it. Our firm don't do much that way. We got old Warriston asleep. Yes, we did. I know what I'm talking about. And we cleaned him out. But he was a fool to give up as he did. We played a game of bluff on him."

Having said all this, Mr. Carter tried to relight his cigar by holding the match fully three inches from any point of contact, and tugging so vigorously that his cheeks formed a double concave.

Not being a double-minded man, in the sense of being able to control two lines of thought at the same moment, Mr. Carter gave his undivided attention to the cigar, utterly ignoring the match between his fingers. But there are times when a match will not be ignored. It angrily resents such treatment; and it expresses that anger most definitely. In this instance that expression took the form of burning Mr. Carter's fingers, which caused him to drop the cigar and hold on to the match. This was not what he intended, but he

was in that condition when his mind worked in opposite directions. The match, however, kept on burning—for a match at times is positively malignant—until Mr. Carter not only dropped it on the floor, but stamped upon it with his boot-heel, at the same time using certain forms of speech known generally as profane.

This little incident strongly appealed to Mr. Dolphin's sense of the humorous. Things of this kind appeal to most men. So long as it is the other man who is holding the match and whose fingers are being burned, there is considerable sport to the lookers-on. Hence Mr. Dolphin laughed. This annoyed Mr. Carter; for he thought Mr. Dolphin was laughing because he claimed to be a partner in the firm of Stennett & Bodell. He therefore, with an air of defiance, went over to Mr. Dolphin, and said:

"I tell you, I am. And what's more, I'm a top-sawyer in the business. If you don't think so, just come to our office and find out. I worked that Warriston business. I know where the stock is and what it can be bought for. I know why Bodell has gone to Saratoga. You may know something about horses, but if you want to know anything about Stennett & Bodell, ask me."

Mr. Dolphin made no reply to this. There was no necessity for it. He knew that in a few moments Mr. Carter would rise up from the chair into which he had abruptly deposited himself, and make his own reply. He usually did. At certain stages of finger-crooking, Mr. Carter was his own audi-

ence; and when no one would answer him, rather than have the debate cease, he answered himself.

"Yes, I know them through and through. And they can't fool me. Say, do you know what I think? Well, I'll tell you. Stennett is n't half as smart as Bodell. I think Bodell is the devil. Yes, I do. I tell you, I do."

Mr. Carter had now reached the confidential stage, a condition most men attain when they have bibulated in quantity. During such stages the person affected puts his mouth close to the listener's ear, then speaks loud enough to be heard on the next block. He is also most affectionate, placing his arm around the neck of the friend chosen for a confidant.

When Mr. Carter reached this stage, Mr. Dolphin usually retired. Having no wife or children to arouse his tender feelings, Mr. Dolphin was irresponsible, and when Mr. Carter became demonstrative, Mr. Dolphin either left the room or incurred the embrace with the warmth of an Indian tobacco-sign. But this night he remained, even suffering Mr. Carter to put his arm about his neck and weep over him as a long-lost but newly-found brother.

Then followed the penitential stage on the part of Mr. Carter, where he would pour out his tears and make all manner of promises. Mr. Dolphin, having gone through this himself a number of times, knew that Mr. Carter's money was all spent; for the financial condition and the penitential stage were closely related.

Years before, Mr. Carter had made a brave struggle to redeem himself from the thrall of a desire which was in his blood; for he had inherited an appetite at times almost overwhelming. A brave but foolish woman undertook the heroic service of trying to save him from himself. For years she made him a sweet, happy home, and their two children brought strange joy to his life. But in an evil day he entered the office of Stennett & Bodell. At first Bodell merely smiled at his scruples, then he called him a strait-laced fool, and, after this, made sport of him before the other clerks. And so it went on till, one day, the poor, weak man forgot the patient, loving woman at home and the two sweet children at her side.

And they are at her side; for she sleeps in her little chamber in Woodlawn Cemetery, her children so close to her that, when the resurrection comes, their mother's voice will be the first to fall upon their ears.

The penitential stage, therefore, with Carter meant more than maudlin tears; for oftentimes it was a season of bitter, agonizing remorse. No wonder, then, that more than once Mr. Dolphin heard him say, when speaking of Bodell, "I tell you, he is the devil."

All these things took place not far from the time our story opens; but they explain in part the movements of a certain clerical-looking gentleman who bought Montana stock from Mr. Stennett, and who, the next day, appeared in Saratoga, watching closely Mr. Bodell's plan of operations.

An electric button on Mr. Carlisle's desk summoned Mr. Dolphin to the inner office, where he remained for some time, conferring with Mr. Carlisle and Mr. Craig. On returning to his own desk, Mr. Dolphin gathered up such letters and papers as required immediate attention, disposing of them in various ways. Then he pulled down the desk-cover, giving it a little jerk to make sure it was locked. Mr. Dolphin evidently was preparing to leave the office for some time, judging by the way he cleared up his desk and the care he took of his papers. Then he went back to the inner office, after which he went out, and, taking the elevator at the door, was carried rapidly downstairs, where he disappeared in the midday Broadway crowd.



ON the morning after his return from Ridgeburg, Stephen Derwent was in the Gotham Bank fully half an hour before opening-time. That was a rule of his, as it enabled him to prepare for the usual forenoon rush. Though quick in his movements, and wonderfully rapid in his handling of money, yet he never allowed himself to be flurried; indeed sometimes he was provokingly deliberate.

One morning, soon after his promotion to the position of teller, Miss Aylesbury presented a check at his window. Not having met her before, he courteously insisted upon the bank rule that required identification in such cases. This proceeding amused Geneva, seeing she was the daughter of one of the bank's directors. Mr. Strathford happening at that moment to come along, she smilingly referred to him, and the matter was instantly adjusted.

"You have a new teller at the bank," she said that evening to her father.

"How do you know?" he asked, in his quick, suspicious way.

"I went in this morning to cash a check, and had to be identified. Mr. Strathford stood sponsor for me."

"Yes, I remember. We put on a new man last week. Derwent, I think they call him. Careful, is he? Well, a man can't be too careful in a bank."

"Is Mr. Derwent, if that is his name, a new man? I thought you promoted men as vacancies occurred."

"So we do," replied Mr. Aylesbury, irritably; for Stephen's promotion had interfered with a little scheme of his own.

"Then the new teller has been in the bank some time?"

Geneva's interview with Stephen had been quite an episode in the day's experiences. She remembered that he was tall, good-looking, with clear, honest eyes, and that his voice had a certain quality which greatly pleased her. She also recalled the little creep of blood which came to his face when Mr. Strathford greeted her so cordially; neither did she forget the smile he tried to hide when giving her the money. More than once during the day she thought of him, wondering who he was and why she had not met him before.

"He has been with us some years," Mr. Aylesbury said. "One of the directors knew his father, and recommended Derwent. Yes, that is the name—I remember now—and he was put into the correspondence department."

"Then he has worked up to his present position?"

Geneva evidently was interested.

"I do n't see much working up about it," Mr. Aylesbury said, still more testily. "When a vacancy occurs, as it is bound to do once in a while, so often, a man is moved along to fill the place. That is all there is of it."

"That being the case, a man has only to live long enough, and he will become president. So, after all, it is only a matter of years."

The artless, unconscious air which was on Geneva's face when she made this remark suggested nothing less than Arcadian simplicity.

"You seem mightily interested in that young teller. Why do n't you invite him up some evening? You would doubtless find him interesting."

As Mr. Aylesbury said this, he did not attempt to conceal the sneer which accompanied his words.

"Thank you for the suggestion. I may adopt it some time. You are partial to the Gotham people."

As Geneva spoke, Mr. Aylesbury glanced up quickly, half hoping to see on her face something of the sneer his own had worn but a moment since. In this he was disappointed. Geneva never sneered. Such things to her were not only vulgar, but signs of weakness. She thought that a word which depended for its force on the curl of the lip was a poor, paltry thing, and were better unspoken. Her face, therefore, was sweetly and innocently calm under her father's scrutiny.

Of late, Mr. Aylesbury had much to say of Mr. Wamphrey and his wonderful success as president of the Gotham. He had spoken most admiringly of the way in which he worked up from a lowly clerkship until now he was a leader in financial circles. At first Geneva hardly knew what to make of all this. But when Mr. Wamphrey had been invited several times to dinner, then dropping in odd evenings when he was certain of finding her at home, finally entering upon a form of attention which she could not but recognize, she began to discern the secret of her father's generous praise.

This was substantially how matters stood when Stephen was appointed teller, which event took place a few months before he went to Ridgeburg for his summer vacation. Geneva went frequently to the bank, nor was there need of further identification. Choosing her banking hours with discretion, she avoided the rush incidental at certain times. This gave Stephen ample opportunity of attending to her checks and such other matters as required his services. He began somehow to look for her coming, and from the moment she entered the bank until she left it, he felt the glow and inspiration of her presence. Once, in paying her some money, their hands touched, and though Stephen's fingers rested for only a moment on hers, yet he tingled from head to foot, and for the rest of that day he lived in a new world. He was well aware that she was Jacob Aylesbury's daughter, and as such moved in a circle far removed from

his, and yet he could not put away the hope and the dream which at times filled his heart to overflowing.

If she had noticed the strange light in his eye, or felt his voice vibrate, or seen his hand even tremble when waiting upon her at his window, it would not have been surprising; for Geneva was keen of vision, and little escaped her. What effect these things had upon herself, Miss Aylesbury did not reveal. All we know is that she came to the bank more regularly than ever, and coming to the bank, in her case, invariably meant some business at Stephen's window.

On the morning after his return from vacation when Stephen reached the bank, his first duty was to arrange the package of bills with which his father intrusted him, and afterwards make inquiry about a suitable bond. He smiled as he undid the package; for his father, not content with a lavish use of twine, had put on several wrappings, tying each one separately. Arranging the bills in bank order—the larger ones at the bottom, then gradually declining as the top was reached—he tied the package up again, first placing a slip inside bearing his father's name, the date when the money had been received, and the purpose for which it was intended. Stephen was well aware that such precautions were unusual, still he thought it best to provide against any mistake. He resolved, when Mr. Strathford came in, to ask him about a bond, and at the same time get his permission to put the package in the bank-safe

for the time being. He then began his usual preparations for the regular business of the morning.

"An' it's myself that's glad to see you back ag'in," said Dan Hogan, the bank porter, as he stood outside Stephen's window, waiting for the clock to strike nine, when he would open the big door.

Dan had given Stephen a similar greeting half an hour before, when he answered his ring at the side entrance. And he was sincere in both instances; for Mr. Hogan, as he was generally called, had taken a deep interest in Stephen ever since he came to the bank. Having been with the Gotham since its beginning, and being a man of unquestioned integrity, Mr. Hogan was well thought of by every one connected with the bank. He occupied rooms on the upper floor of the building, and had general care of the entire premises.

There was a Mrs. Hogan, a kind, motherly woman, whose brogue retained much of its original sweetness; for she came from County Cork, a circumstance regarding which she had considerable pride. During the years there had been a fair sprinkling of Hogans, both male and female; but they had gone out from time to time, making homes for themselves. One boy remained—Theobald Mathew—named for the famous temperance apostle, whose statue adorns Mrs. Hogan's native city. The boy, however, was generally called Teddy, and at home rarely got more than Ted.

In some mysterious way, Ted had been deprived of sight, coming into the world totally blind.

But as nature is full of compensations, the boy had gifts which were denied to every other member of the Hogan family. Not only was there a wonderful acuteness of hearing and a marvelous sense of touch, but something in the nature of spiritual vision. Not that he was clairvoyant or subject to mesmeric fancies, but somehow he was able to see and realize things hidden from ordinary eyes.

Once, in the bank, when Mr. Bodell came in, Ted, who was standing near Stephen's window, shivered as though stricken with a chill, and put out his hands in a helpless, entreating way. Bodell, thinking the boy was taken suddenly ill, went over to him, but the moment Ted felt his hand he shrieked as if touched by fire. He had much the same feeling in Mr. Strathford's presence, shrinking with terror and turning deathly pale if the cashier spoke to him. Ted was about ten years of age when this peculiar gift first manifested itself, but people thought it would pass away as he grew older. But it rather deepened. Mr. Hogan therefore, being sensitive, did not allow Ted in the bank during business hours. And yet, strange as it may seem, though upstairs with his mother, he instantly realized when anything unusual took place in the offices below. At the time spoken of here he was not far from twelve years old, but, being small and ethereal-looking, he seemed much younger.

When Stephen first went to the Gotham, Mrs. Hogan, knowing that he was a country lad, ren-

dered him such kind services as were within her power. Once, when he was sick, she insisted upon acting as nurse, freely giving of her time and care, and when Stephen attempted a remonstrance, she said:

"An' shure it's your mother that would be doin' the same thing for my boy, if it was him that needed it. Can't I tell the kind of a mother you have by the kind of a son she has?"

When he got better, he called on the Hogan, making the acquaintance of Ted, who took to him at once, first standing by his chair, then getting up on his knee, nor did he allow Stephen beyond his touch all evening. Stephen occasionally took Ted out to Central Park on Saturday afternoon, and as the boy listened to the music at the Mall, or to the birds singing in the Ramble, his face would light up as with radiance from a mysterious sky. At another time they would go to the beach, where the roar of the breakers or the sweep of the winds had for Ted a wondrous charm. The boy rarely asked questions, content if Stephen held his hand or remained within his touch. Mr. Hogan, therefore, when he expressed his joy at seeing Stephen back again from Ridgeburg, was speaking not only for himself, but also for Ted.

When Mr. Strathford came in, Stephen spoke to him about his father's package of bills, and the bond as well, receiving permission to use the safe until the bond matter was decided.

Some time during the forenoon a gentleman came to Stephen's window with a check for cer-

tification. As the check was for a large amount, Stephen looked carefully at the signature, which was that of James Bodell. Instantly he recalled the conversation with his father and his promise to note carefully the Mr. Bodell of whom he had spoken.

"You are the signer of this check?" Stephen asked.

He desired to detain Bodell while he compared him with his father's description.

"I am," was the curt reply.

"And you wish Mr. Strathford's indorsement?"

Stephen asked again, watching every movement on Bodell's face.

"Mr. Strathford's or the bank's. It is the same thing, I presume," Bodell replied, his eyes shifting uneasily under Stephen's steady look.

But that was a peculiarity of Bodell's eyes. They could stare in the most impudent and defiant way. They could burn and blaze, emitting sparks as of fire. They could mock so cruelly that people would shrink under them. But when they were looked into fearlessly, they shifted, and never gave a frank, steady look in return.

"I will take the check to Mr. Strathford," Stephen said, now fully satisfied that the man before him was Squire Bodell's son.

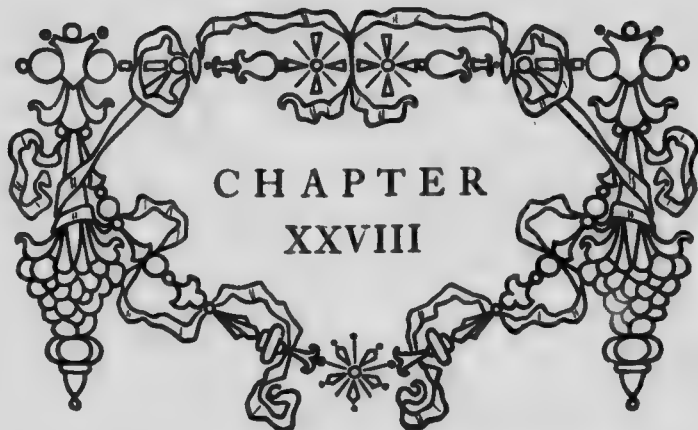
In a few moments he returned with the check duly certified, which he gave to Mr. Bodell, who almost snatched it from his hand, and immediately left the bank.

An elderly gentleman, evidently a clergyman,

who had been leisurely filling out a deposit blank, looked up as Mr. Bodell was passing. He apparently changed his mind regarding a deposit; for he at once gathered up his book and papers, and went out. On reaching Broadway, Mr. Bodell took an uptown car, and by the way in which he ensconced himself in a vacant corner he intended going some distance.

By a singular coincidence there happened to be another corner seat vacant, into which dropped contentedly the old gentleman, who had so abruptly left the Gotham Bank.

Mr. Bodell's eager, restless eyes traveled everywhere, seeing everything. The old gentleman sat absorbed in his newspaper.



AUSTIN TREMAINE, as was perfectly natural under the circumstances, felt a deep interest in Stephen Derwent. The simple fact of his being Ruth's brother made him a tender object in Tremaine's eyes. Real love is a generous, all-inclusive emotion. A man's prospective mother-in-law may have a big wart on the side of her nose, a neck as ungainly as a piece of drain-pipe, a figure from which everything of grace has long since departed, but as the mother of his adored one, his heart goes out to her in holy affection. He may not regard her as the highest ideal of feminine beauty, nor refer to her as the perfect embodiment of all that is exquisite and charming; still the love which is given so lavishly to Aramintha extends even to Aramintha's mother. Anyhow, Tremaine often called at the bank, and, while there, invariably, if opportunity occurred, chatted for a few moments with Stephen.

He was there one day when Mr. Bodell came in, who, after attending to some matters at

Stephen's window, asked Dan Hogan if Mr. Strathford was in his private office, and if he could see him, giving his name so loudly that Mr. Tremaine easily heard it. This caused him to look closely at Bodell, for he had a vivid remembrance of his interview with the old Squire. He immediately saw a striking resemblance between the two men, though the one was so much older and on the brink of death, and the other in the fullness of life. He observed, also, the quick, restless eyes, the cruel mouth, the defiant air, and the haughty, imperious bearing of Bodell as he stood there impatiently waiting for Mr. Hogan to return.

"Misther Strathfoord sez for you not to lave for about foive minutes, an' he will be out to see you," Dan said, when he came back.

Tremaine observed the gleam in Bodell's eyes upon receiving this message, and also the peculiar smile which curled on his lips. He did not seem over-pleased at having to wait; but, taking a newspaper from his pocket, he went back to a window where was an open space, and began reading in his quick, eager way.

Tremaine at once went over to where Bodell was standing, and said:

"Excuse me, sir, but did you say to the porter your name is Mr. Bodell?"

"I did. May I ask in what way my name has any interest for you?" Bodell answered, holding the paper as before, but turning his eyes defiantly on Tremaine.

He saw Tremaine was a clergyman; for though the garb was less pretentious than with Mr. Dolphin, there were certain outward and visible signs which he recognized. For clergymen Bodell had small regard. He looked upon them as weak, effeminate creatures, whose chief concerns were vestments and altar-cloths. The idea of a big, virile man giving himself to such a calling never once occurred to Bodell. Yet right before him was just such a man; for Tremaine stood full six feet in his stockings, and looked the hardy athlete all over. Bodell also saw more than blood in that face, or health in those eyes. He saw power, resolution, a will as determined as his own, a strength against which he might well hesitate to measure himself. His reply therefore was purposely curt, with intent to disconcert the young clergyman.

"In this way it has an interest for me," Tremaine answered, calmly, meantime more than meeting Bodell's impatient glance; for his eyes never took themselves from Bodell's face; "I spent part of the summer at Ridgeburg," here Bodell gave a perceptible start, which he tried to cover up by folding his newspaper, "and while there I was sent for by a Squire Bodell, who desired to see me."

Again Bodell started, and again he tried to hide it, but the strong, clear eyes of Tremaine remained as before, and they saw Bodell's movement in each instance.

"You think, because of the name, I am related to the person you saw?"

"Yes."

"And his name, you say, was Bodell?"

"Yes. Squire Bodell he was generally called."

"And the name of the place, what was it?"

"Ridgeburg, in the northern part of this State."

"Bodell is not such an uncommon name as to make your idea probable."

"That may be, but the circumstances under which I met Squire Bodell, and the story which I had from his lips make me most anxious to meet his son."

"But why should you think I am Squire Bodell's son? There may be a score of Bodells in the city, perhaps a hundred, or even more."

Bodell made a mistake in asking this question. To ask a question at a critical time is like opening the iron door of a walled fortress, thus making possible an attack against which nothing can prevail. Tremaine was quick to see his advantage, and, before Bodell's words were well spoken, he said, with thrilling emphasis, though speaking in a whisper:

"The reason I think you are Squire Bodell's son is simply this: you are his son, and I know it, and you dare not deny it."

Tremaine's eyes now held Bodell's as though invisible wires reached from one to the other. Nor could Bodell get out from the power of that intense, determined look. Shifty as his eyes usually were, for once they had met a force against which they were helpless. There was that in Tremaine's look as well as in his voice, something so absolute and

masterful, that Bodell could not offer the denial he intended. He therefore said impatiently:

"Supposing such is the case—though I am only supposing it—what possible concern can it be of yours?"

"Just this," replied Tremaine, and speaking as before, "I have been intrusted with a message from Squire Bodell, a message given to me in holy confidence, and which can only be repeated to the one for whom it is intended."

In every great battle there are decisive moments when the opposing forces meet in one mighty struggle. At such moments the fate of empires trembles in the balances. It was so in this conflict between Bodell and Tremaine. They were both conscious the supreme moment had come. One or the other must yield. If Bodell refused to admit the relationship to the Squire, Tremaine was helpless. If he admitted it, he conceded that Tremaine had a will stronger and more imperious than his own.

So there they stood, both outwardly calm, but each straining every power of which he was possessed. The tremendous self-will of Bodell, like the Old Guard at Waterloo, threw itself against the massive strength of Tremaine, there to meet cold, remorseless steel. The poise, the adroitness, the skill with which Bodell had so often conquered were here unavailing. He tried to assume an air of bravado, and his lips looked contemptuous; but the terrible eyes of Tremaine pierced the petty subterfuge, and reached to his inmost heart. No

such conflict had ever raged in that bank before. Men had struggled there mightily; but it was fortune against fortune, interest battling with interest. But this was a soul battle. These men were contending for supremacy in the realm of spirit. And defeat meant an irretrievable overthrow to the one who was conquered.

Finally Bodell said, in a voice hardly above his breath, "What is the message?"

"I can not give it here, Mr. Bodell," answered Tremaine in the same voice. "Appoint your own time and place, and I will arrange to meet you."

"Give me your card," Bodell then said. "I will write you. Mr. Strathford is coming, and I have an engagement with him."

Tremaine gave Bodell his card, who took it hastily; then, seeing Mr. Strathford, he started to meet him, and they both went to the cashier's private room.

"I saw you speaking to Mr. Tremaine," said the cashier, when he had shut the door. "He is making some repairs or alterations on his church. I presume he wanted a subscription."

"That was the reason, I presume, why you did n't come out," Bodell answered.

"Not altogether, though you probably have given enough for both of us."

"He is welcome to all he gets from me," Bodell angrily responded. "These canting parsons, who spend their time meddling with other people's business, levying blackmail on the community, deserve to be tarred and feathered."

Now that the strong, clear eyes of Tremaine no longer held him in thrall, Bodell easily resumed his rôle of braggart and scoffer.

"I am afraid you have n't a high regard for these noble sons of the Church," Strathford said, flippantly.

"Noble sons—phah!" Bodell fiercely exclaimed, his anger now breaking through all forms of restraint, "a lot of sniveling humbugs!"

"Tremaine must have nailed you for a big subscription, and now you are sorry for it. But do n't lose any sleep over it. Drop him a line, and say you have reconsidered the matter. I often do that. People come here and bother me; so I get rid of them by making all sorts of promises. Then, the next day, they get a little note, saying I regret, and all the rest of it. Great scheme."

"When I write to Tremaine it will be to tell him that he is a sneak, a spy, a blackmailer, poking his nose into matters which are not his concern, and that he had better mind his own business in future."

As Mr. Bodell expressed himself in this elegant and chivalrous form, he rose from his chair, and strode across the room, a picture of rage and fury.

"We 'll let Tremaine go," Strathford said, who saw that something had greatly angered Bodell. "We have other things of more importance to discuss. What is the last word from Cutty Hunk? And how is that little venture of ours?"

They talked for some time, Bodell forgetting

his anger in the big future for Cutty Hunk, and Strathford listening with absorbed attention.

Tremaine, having seen Stephen for a moment, and arranged for a meeting later in the week, went out with Fred Westerhall, who came into the Gotham while he was speaking with Mr. Bodell.

"Well, young man, you must give an account of yourself, and how you have spent your summer. So far as I understand your movements, you went with Derwent to Albany, arranging to meet him at Ridgeburg, where we had all manner of attractions provided for you."

Tremaine tried to speak in his usual cheery way; but it was not easy, for the interview with Bodell had taken some virtue out of him.

"Ridgeburg, I understand, is an attractive place. Hills to climb, lakes to sail, streams to fish, and all the rest of it. What a pity the people are not so attractive as the place!"

Fred's face was too guileless. His innocence and simplicity were overdone. But no man should ever try to be artless. He is too clumsy. It is like trying to do miniature portrait-painting with a whitewash brush. Tremaine, therefore, only smiled, and not at Fred's remark, but at Fred himself, for the veil with which he had draped his innocent allusion was as open as a fish-net.

"The Ridgeburg people are not under discussion at present," Tremaine remarked, "but a certain guileless young gentleman known among his friends as Fred Westerhall."

"I confess, then, to going to Albany with Stephen. I also confess to having had designs upon Ridgeburg, but I went to Canada instead. There I met my Cousin Robert, and we took a trip to Montana. I think that covers the case."

"Did you hear anything in Montana of a Mr. Bodell who lived there some years ago? But then he was in the mining region."

"That is where we were," Fred answered, "and I did hear of a Mr. Bodell."

"What did you hear?"

"That he was a schemer, a trickster, an adventurer of the most brutal type," Fred answered without a moment's hesitation.

"You saw that man to whom I was speaking when you came into the bank?"

"Yes," Fred replied, wonderingly.

"Did you notice him particularly?"

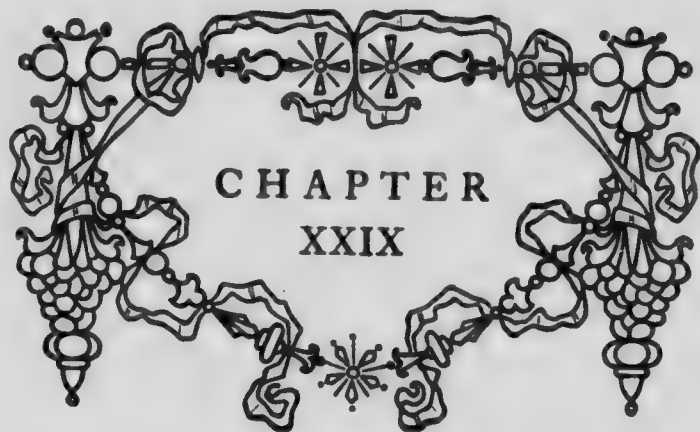
"I did."

"Well, that man is James Bodell."

"You do n't mean the Bodell of whom I heard in Montana?"

"I do."

They had now walked up Broadway beyond the City Hall, when Mr. Tremaine, remembering an engagement uptown, took a cable-car, leaving Fred to think over the surprising fact of his having seen Bodell, the man of whom he had recently heard so much.



AS Mrs. Libby was going to Ohio, where one of her daughters resided, she desired to sell her cottage before leaving. Fearing that this might seriously inconvenience the Warristons, Abram Derwent drove across to Forestville, where Mrs. Libby was now living, and had a talk with her concerning the little property.

Ever since the Warristons came to Ridgeburg, Mr. Derwent had been a frequent visitor at the Libby cottage. At just about such an hour every evening, Abram might be seen coming up the road, his hands clasped behind his back, his shoulders bent somewhat as if weary with the day's toil, but his honest face lifting itself gratefully in the twilight. After the usual greetings, he would sit down in his accustomed place, take out his corncob, fill it carefully, then proceed to smoke with evident enjoyment. Mr. Warriston watched this performance much as one would a fisherman arrange his line and set his bait preparatory to casting it into the stream.

Stephen had tried to persuade his father to use cut tobacco, and sent a handsome jar of a choice mixture; but Abram missed the preliminaries, the cutting into fine flakes, the rubbing between his hands, the pulling apart of refractory pieces, and then the satisfaction with which he regarded his completed work.

"I admit," he said to Stephen, "it is fine and regular; but that," pointing to the jar, "looks as if a man was smoking for the sake of tobacco, whereas I only smoke for the fun of it."

Being tolerably keen-eyed, though not of a prying disposition—a failing common with country people—Mr. Derwent observed many signs of economy in the Libby cottage. Evidently the family purse was slender. Of course, he asked no questions, neither did he say much at home, but it invariably happened that a few prints of butter came up after each churning. Then, every day or two, a little basket of eggs made its appearance, some of the eggs so fresh that the hens which laid them had hardly ceased cackling. Frequently Abram would stop on his way to and from the station, and at such times invariably had an excuse for bringing something to Miss Warriston. And it was all done with such tact that there was no sense of oppressive obligation, but a feeling of mutual pleasure and kindness.

The relations between the two families being so cordial, it was only natural, when Abram knew of Mrs. Libby's intention to sell the cottage, his first thought was for the Warristons. The result

was that he bought the cottage, arranging with Mrs. Libby to pay her the money before she went to Ohio. He then wrote to Stephen, telling him not to buy the bond, as he wanted the money for Mrs. Libby, and would send for it in due time. So the package of bills remained in the big, time-locked, steel-bolted safe, one upon which no burglar would waste his time, or thief ever hope to open.

Mr. Strathford was aware of this; for Stephen had spoken of his father's change of mind concerning the bond, and of the new purpose intended for the money.

"How do you think your father would regard an investment in Cutty Hunk?" Mr. Strathford said to Stephen one morning.

Stephen smiled, but shook his head.

"He might double that money within a month," Mr. Strathford remarked.

"My father has rather limited ideas of business," Stephen answered; but feeling that his reply did not do his father justice, he added, "and some old-fashioned notions about money."

"It is a great pity to have that money lying idle in the safe when it could so easily turn itself over," Mr. Strathford said, in a friendly, confidential way.

"As we look at things, it certainly is; but my father regards that money as Mrs. Libby's, and he would n't touch it on any account."

"But the money is not due for several weeks. It is your father's money, and will remain so till

it is paid to some one else. If he bought thousand dollars' worth of Cutty Hunk, and between now and the time he has to pay for the property made another thousand, he might have both the cottage and the bond."

"According to my father's ideas, if that money should be taken from the safe, inasmuch as he has reserved it for Mrs. Libby, any profit he might make he would insist belonged to her."

"He would never succeed in the banking business."

"I have often told him so."

"You do n't entertain such notions."

"By no means."

"I should hope not. But you might write to your father suggesting a purchase in Cutty Hunk, or, at any rate, giving you the use of the money until it is done. It is a great chance."

"I will write most certainly, but I am certain he will not consent."

"Tell him I will assume the entire responsibility, and stand ready to cover any loss," Mr. Strathford said, handing Stephen some papers which had required the cashier's signature.

Stephen thanked Mr. Strathford for his generous offer, and said he would write in season for the afternoon mail.

When he went back to his window, Dan Hogan was there with an urgent invitation from Mrs. Hogan to take tea at the Hogan apartments, and spend part of the evening with Ted, who desired greatly to see him. As Stephen had hardly more

than seen the little fellow since returning from Ridgeburg, and this particular evening being free, he accepted Mrs. Hogan's invitation, much to Dan's evident satisfaction.

At odd moments during the day Stephen thought seriously of what Mr. Strathford had said. Cutty Hunk matters were discussed freely in the bank. It was known that Mr. Wamphrey was heavily interested in the new company. It was also known that Mr. Strathford, not content with his original purchase at the formation of the company, had made large additions to his holdings. Most of the bank officials had been favored with admissions to the "ground floor" circle of shareholders. But, so far, the shares had been taken privately. The rush would come later when the stock was offered for public sale. During the weeks of Stephen's vacation, Cutty Hunk matters had gone forward by leaps and bounds.

Stephen, therefore, wondered if Mr. Strathford's suggestion might not be accepted. It certainly was a kindly proposition. Under Mr. Strathford's conditions, his father had no risk whatever. Then he began to query if he could not let Mr. Strathford have the money without waiting to hear from Ridgeburg. This would be a compliment to Mr. Strathford's judgment, and also an appreciation of his kindness.

Stephen was considerably perplexed every time he thought of Mr. Strathford's suggestion. He had a young man's natural ambition and desire to improve his opportunities.

Ted was waiting for him when he went upstairs to the Hogans. In fact, Ted had been waiting for him all day. Mr. Hogan, after seeing that Stephen had the place of honor in the room known as the parlor, this being a big easy-chair, went off in search of Mrs. Hogan to announce the arrival of their guest. In due time Mrs. Hogan came to the parlor, saying that tea was ready; so they went to the dining-room, Mrs. Hogan leading the procession, Stephen coming next, Ted holding him by the hand, Mr. Hogan forming the rear guard.

On such evenings as Stephen was her guest, Mrs. Hogan's teas were exhibits of real Irish hospitality. Having a Ridgeburg appetite, Stephen was able to deal creditably with Mrs. Hogan's generous arrangements; for the Ridgeburg appetite, once fairly aroused, is something to be admired. And the more thoroughly Stephen enjoyed Mrs. Hogan's fare, the more Mrs. Hogan enjoyed Stephen.

"Made from a resate of my own," she said, proudly, helping him to an enormous piece of cake.

"An' shure ther's plinty more where that came from," as she placed before Stephen a heaping dish of ice-cream.

"You would n't be havin' us break our cups, Misther Derwent," she responded, smilingly, when Stephen asked for half a cup of tea. "Och, an' you're not goin' to stop now? Why, Dan's only gettin' started," when Stephen gave signs of unconditional surrender.

But there are limits to even a Ridgeburg appetite, and Stephen reached those limits in due season. Then they went back to the parlor, Stephen again taking the big chair, and also a cigar which Mr. Hogan had thoughtfully provided.

Mrs. Hogan, having certain duties in the kitchen, Stephen and Mr. Hogan soon drifted into bank gossip, Ted sitting on the side of the big chair, his sensitive face lighting up at nearly every sound of Stephen's voice.

"An' it seems to me as if all of them had the Cutty Hunk faver," said Mr. Hogan. "I niver saw the loikes of it. First Misther Wamp'rey gits it. Then, after him, Misther Strathford. Then one, an' then another, until about every gintleman in the bank gits it. On one occasion Misther Strathford spoke to me about it.

"'Daniel,' sez he, 'do n't you want to put some of your money into Cutty Hunk?'

"'Lord save us,' sez I, 'an' what is that?'

"In my country, Misther Derwent, 'Cutty' is the name we gave to a short clay pipe—like this, for instance," and Mr. Hogan produced a clay tobacco-pipe, of abbreviated stem, but positive odor, which had seen much service, judging by the blackness of both shank and bowl. "Then 'hunk' means a big piece of bread, such as we'd given to some poor divil at the door. So at first I did n't git at what Misther Strathford intended. But he very kindly explained it all to me; how they had found three or four mountains of solid copper out West somewhere, as high as the Giant's Causeway, an'

as dape as the lakes of Killarney, an' that I might have a piece of these mountains all to myself. He talked so fair an' so pleasant that I came near drawin' out my little savin's—the money I had put aside for Ted. But Ted, for some reason, would n't hear of it. Ted, my boy, if your poor ould father has made a miss this toime, it's yourself that 's to blame."

"Then you do n't approve of Cutty Hunk?" Stephen said, laying a hand affectionately on the boy's shoulder.

"Not the Cutty Hunk they talk of downstairs," Ted answered, taking Stephen's hand from his shoulder and holding it in a loving clasp.

"What is wrong with the downstairs Cutty Hunk?" Stephen asked, good-humoredly.

"A good deal," Ted replied, in a tone which he rarely used, but which when heard was almost unearthly.

"It may have been only a dream," Ted went on in the same voice as before, "but I have seen the mountains of copper, and there is blood on them. Dead men are lying at the mines. Flames are coming out on every side. The sky is full of blackness."

The boy shuddered and trembled as he spoke, which made his words all the more impressive. Then, for a few moments, nothing more was said. Mr. Hogan sat looking intently at Ted; for he saw, by the strange expression on the boy's face, that there were things passing before his sightless eyes which other eyes could not see. Mean-

while Ted's hands were gently smoothing those of Stephen's, who, though familiar with the lad's mysterious gifts of vision, could not but wonder as to the meaning of the words just spoken. Then all at once Ted's hands became rigid, closing upon his hand as if stricken in a convulsion. At the same moment his face became strangely drawn, and fire seemed to flash from his eyes. But, with the exception of the first movement of his hands, he remained almost as marble. Just then Mrs. Hogan came into the room, and would have spoken; but Daniel held up his hand, a sign which she understood. All three were now watching Ted, whose face was white as death, but whose eyes fairly blazed in their sockets. From the door near the front of the building his eyes slowly moved, resting here and there as if obstructed in some way, finally going out from the parlor into the room beyond; here his intense look concentrated itself, his eyes fixed as in death. Then he said:

"Mr. Strathford is downstairs, doing something to the timelock in the safe."

Immediately his fingers relaxed on Stephen's hands, some blood came back to his face, the strange fire died out of his eyes, and when he spoke again it was in his natural voice.

"It's about toime I made my round," Mr. Hogan said, now rising from his chair. "You know I have to go through the bank once in so often until the night-watchman comes, which is at ten o'clock."

"May I go with you?" Stephen asked, who felt deeply moved by Ted's mysterious words.

"No, thank you," Mr. Hogan answered, giving Stephen a meaning look. "I'll make my report in a few minutes."

Another look from Mr. Hogan gave Stephen to understand that Ted was not allowed to know of these peculiar visions, and, as he never referred to them unless at rare intervals, they did not speak of them in his presence.

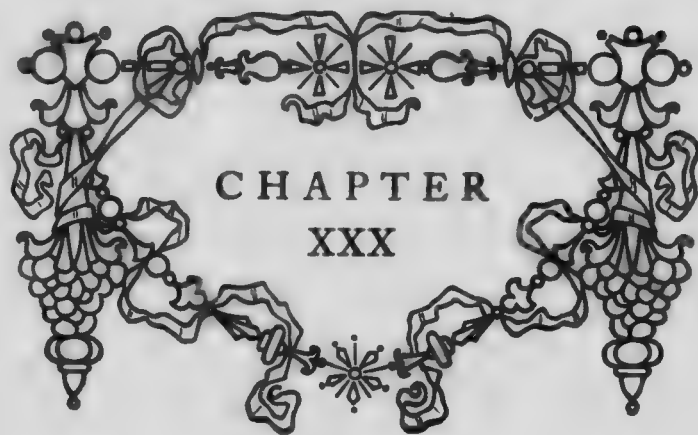
In a few minutes Mr. Hogan returned, saying that everything was all right, and that Mr. Strathford, having some special matters in hand, had been at work since early evening in his private office. This, Mr. Hogan added, was quite a common thing for Mr. Strathford to do.

Stephen, however, could not wholly suppress his surprise when he learned of Mr. Strathford's being downstairs at the time when Ted said he saw him at the safe; but another glance from Mr. Hogan prevented him from saying anything more.

He remained for the rest of the evening, making his usual visit with Ted, who evidently had no remembrance of copper mountains or bank safes; for he listened with all a boy's delight to Stephen's stories of Ridgeburg, laughing heartily at his description of Mr. Tremaine when he made his famous slide on the baseball-field.

But on his way home, even amid the noises of the street, Stephen could hear Ted saying:

"Mr. Strathford is downstairs, doing something to the timelock in the safe."



MRS. DEVERAL'S imaginary hand gave her considerable trouble. Being the right hand, the one she used with such energy when demonstrating the non-existence of her body, the suspension of its activity annoyed her excessively. And Mrs. Deveral did not approve of being annoyed. Anything that interfered with her noble ideal of ethereal life, she strongly resented. To her transcendent genius the body was lighter, more aerial, infinitely finer in texture than a soap-bubble, and under no circumstances could impede the movements of the soul. But there was that hand, swollen, discolored, helpless, and though the pains which shot through it were mere fancies, yet as a form of the imagination they were neither rapturous nor blissful.

Under these circumstances, Mrs. Deveral was not an ideal guest. She became peevish, irritable, querulous, and, though a Prophetess of high degree, she often lost her temper and said things neither divine nor beautiful. This was unfortu-

nate, because it brought Mrs. Deveral the woman into collision with Mrs. Deveral the Prophetess, and the Prophetess came off second best.

To have her imaginary beefsteak—Mrs. Deveral was fond of beefsteak, succulent, of generous proportions, rarely beginning her aerial flights for the day without this as a preliminary—cut up into small pieces for her by Mrs. Maitland, or, more degrading still, by the cook; to have her imaginary toast or rolls—Mrs. Deveral was fond of both toast and rolls—buttered and prepared because she could not help herself; in short, to have to sit at the table and be fed as one would an overgrown child, was exceedingly distasteful to Mrs. Deveral. Her theory of being all soul and no body was in danger. Indeed, there was a possibility of some people thinking her all body and no soul.

But what distressed her more than all else was the growing unbelief of Mrs. Maitland. She had hoped great things from Mrs. Maitland, counting her as one of her stanchest followers. Mrs. Maitland's wandering from the faith gave her, therefore, much concern; for through her devotion she had counted on reaching a goodly number of New York's chosen ones, teaching them both to empty their minds and to fill her pockets. In matters that pertained to filthy lucre, Mrs. Deveral carefully eliminated the imaginary. Her splendid vision never lost sight of pecuniary gain. The higher the flights of her eloquence, the deeper she went into the purses of her hearers. Her body



might levitate, float as on invisible wings through the yielding air, but she desired no such quality in her pocketbook. This was why she limited her gracious ministry to those who could open their treasuries at her dulcet voice, and bring their tributes to her waiting hand. She determined, therefore, at all hazards, to keep her hold upon Mrs. Maitland, and, after thinking the matter over, concluded to work in co-operation with Mr. Bodell.

At this stage of our story it need hardly be said that Mr. Bodell was a singular personage. Though men, as a rule, questioned his motives, doubted his sincerity, and generally regarded him with suspicion, yet they admitted him to their fellowship, and seemed to find pleasure in his society. And though women, as a rule, disliked him, and had no confidence whatever in his professions, still they invited him to their gatherings, and in such circles as he had access to, not infrequently he was the chief figure in the company.

Upon some people he exercised a mesmeric influence, he held them in thrall, and they yielded to his spell. Others he dominated by sheer force of will, compelling obedience by a sort of spirit mastery. Then there were others whom he persuaded. Words more musical than bird-notes fell upon their ear. Suggestions sweeter than honey were presented to their minds, and, in listening, the siren's story passed from fable into experience. Some he would laugh at, and, in the presence of his light, scornful laughter, scruples would vanish as dew before the hot sun.

That he was cruel, treacherous, wily; sinuous as a serpent, passionate as a lion, and implacable as death, were matters of common belief; but because he was handsome, had a winsome tongue, a fascinating address, and an audacity almost infinite, no man for the time was more generally popular, or occupied a more enviable position. Young girls gathered around him, and listened as to an oracle. Matrons waited on him at teas and evening gatherings with positive rivalry. At a dinner his *bon mots* and keen repartee enlivened many a table which otherwise would have been dull. In the smoking-room it was his story at which the men would roar with delight.

He often went to Mrs. Maitland's, seldom losing an opportunity to hear Mrs. Deveral, whose views he accepted without question.

"You see how pleasantly it relieves us of all responsibility," he said to her one evening when she had been explaining her theories at length.

Whatever else Mrs. Deveral required in her explaining process, she must have length,—and great length. Indeed, the longer she talked, the greater the need of explanation.

"Personal responsibility under this supreme idea is simply impossible," the Prophetess responded, with oratorical emphasis.

"Why people will burden themselves in such a needless, foolish way, is beyond my comprehension," Mr. Bodell said, speaking at Mrs. Deveral, but to Mrs. Maitland.

"Then all this nonsense about heredity is ef-

fectually disposed of, seeing the body is a non-existent superfluity," Mrs. Deveral went on, beautifully unconscious of the hopeless contradiction of her terms.

"Very true," Mr. Bodell replied, but not enthusiastically.

He had found much comfort in well-defined ideas of heredity. All his passions, desires, tendencies, he charged up to ancestry, claiming that his life was simply a river into which so many rills and streams emptied themselves, and that for either the taste or the color of the waters, no obligation attached to him.

"In the same way it removes the horrible doctrine of sin," the Prophetess continued; "and of all the monstrous perversions of the human intellect, nothing is comparable with the degrading suggestion, contained in what is called 'the doctrine of sin.' It is a confusion of intolerable bondage. It means that the soul is held in a worse dungeon than the Black Hole of Calcutta. Out upon such slavery! What are we if we are not free?"

"Just what I have believed all my life," answered Bodell, with rare fervor. "If people will insist upon an old Oriental fable of an apple and a tree, I also insist upon my right to eat such apples as I please. And when they tell us that the tree is good, and has the quality of making us wise, we would be foolish not to eat all the fruit we wish. What say you, Mrs. Maitland?"

At that particular moment, though her blue eyes had gone from one speaker to the other, as

if closely following the discussion, Mrs. Maitland was thinking what an intolerable bore Mrs. Deveral had become, and how could she possibly get rid of her! And then the moment before she had thought that Mr. Bodell was much too frequent a visitor in her house, now that Mr. Maitland was in Europe, and she had wondered what was best for her to do. These were the things Mrs. Maitland was thinking of when the Prophetess and Mr. Bodell were holding high intellectual intercourse, and to which she seemed to be intently listening.

"Well, I don't know," she answered, after a short pause. "These questions are not familiar with me as they are with you and Mrs. Deveral. But the other side has not yet stated its case."

Then she smiled sweetly, and all the more so because of her escape from a temporary embarrassment.

"The other side has been stating its case for thousands of years," Mrs. Deveral retorted, with a fair measure of asperity.

"But I have not been here for thousands of years," Mrs. Maitland innocently remarked.

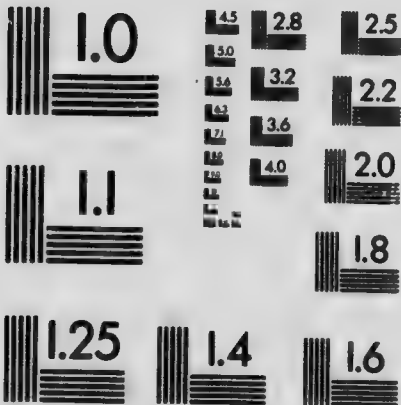
This simple reply annoyed the Prophetess. She imagined it suggested a measure of antiquity on her part. Because of her wounded hand there were certain toilet mysteries which she was compelled to share with Mrs. Maitland, who made sundry flippant, if not unkind remarks.

It may be that Mrs. Maitland had nothing personal in her reply, and yet she contrived to put



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

a distinct emphasis upon the first person singular. Hence the anger of the Prophetess.

"By the way," said Bodell, "have you heard the latest about Miss Aylesbury?"

Bodell saw the storm coming, so he changed the ship's course.

"No; what is it?" was the response, both ladies speaking at once.

"It seems that her father has been urgent in suggesting Mr. Wamphrey as a possible husband to Miss Aylesbury. She point-blank refuses the suggestion, and will not even see Mr. Wamphrey when he calls. The dove of peace, therefore, no longer hovers over the Aylesbury mansion."

"Geneva is a strange girl," said Mrs. Maitland.

"She is a bold, impudent thing," said the Prophetess.

"She always had romantic notions," said Mrs. Maitland.

"She always was a fool," said the Prophetess.

"Mr. Wamphrey, though much older than Geneva, would make her a good husband," said Mrs. Maitland.

"He is a thousand times too good for her, no matter how old he is," said the Prophetess.

Then Mr. Bodell said:

"You know one time, when Mr. Aylesbury was on Queer Street and about to fail, he made over most of his property to his wife. She, without saying anything to him, conveyed the property to her daughter, appointing as trustees special

friends of her own. Shortly after this, Mrs. Aylesbury died, and when the sorrowing widower attempted to resume possession of his former estates, the trustees interfered. By all accounts, Aylesbury was mad enough; still he had to put up with it. He thought when Miss Aylesbury came of age she would adjust matters. But she would n't concur in any arrangement, and now holds the property. This Wamphrey business brought matters to a head. She—"

Bodell was here interrupted by Mrs. Maitland saying:

"Geneva was always an independent girl."

Then by the Prophetess saying:

"She is a greedy, selfish girl—"

"has now gone into the profession of the ultra pious, works altar-cloths, teaches in some mission, and, under the leadership of a sanctimonious parson called Tremaine, is fast assuming the proportions of a saint," Bodell said, when he had a chance to complete his sentence.

"Have you ever seen Mr. Tremaine?" Mrs. Maitland asked.

"Never," answered Bodell; "but I presume he is of the usual type of wheedling parsons, who contrive to frighten or flatter people more weak-minded even than themselves."

"This proves you have never seen Mr. Tremaine," said Mrs. Maitland. "I have met him several times."

"Of course he is unmarried," the Prophetess said, sneeringly.

"Very likely," was Mrs. Maitland's reply.

"And handsome as well," the Prophetess continued, the sneer likewise.

"That depends," Mrs. Maitland said, defiantly.

"Given: a young, handsome, unmarried parson, and a young, handsome, unmarried woman, and the conditions of saintship are at once established," Mr. Bodell remarked.

"The woman need not always be unmarried," the Prophetess said, spitefully, looking at Mrs. Maitland.

"Or handsome," returned Mrs. Maitland, purring, looking at the Prophetess.

"Or young," the Prophetess retorted.

"Or a thousand years old," Mrs. Maitland quietly murmured.

"The last thing I heard was that Miss Aylesbury had promised a big subscription to the Church of this young, handsome, unmarried parson, and that Mr. Aylesbury was so angry about it he wouldn't even speak to her," Mr. Bodell said.

"Having her own money, she can do as she pleases," Mrs. Maitland observed.

"It is n't her own money; it's her father's," the Prophetess snarled.

"Her mother gave it her," was the purring response of Mrs. Maitland.

"Her father made it," the Prophetess said, vindictively.

"Considering that he was in Queer Street when he gave this money to Mrs. Aylesbury, I think

it belongs to the creditors," Mr. Bodell said, with a beautiful assumption of indignant honesty.

Just at this moment Mrs. Maitland was called to the reception-room, when the Prophetess unmasked in her most imperious way:

"We have met before, Mr. Bodell."

"We have," he answered; "I remember some of the circumstances distinctly."

"You made no sign of recognition;" the Prophetess did not speak so imperiously as before.

"There was no need of it. Besides, I thought you would not care to have some things recalled."

This made the Prophetess wince. She intended Mr. Bodell to do the wincing. But he did n't. His black eyes flashed ominously. His white, pointed teeth gleamed through a malicious smile. Mrs. Deverall's bullet was of lead, and came from a well-aimed rifle; but it had struck against a heavy steel plate, not even making a dent, only falling flattened on the ground.

"Perhaps we had better let bygones be bygones," she remarked, as she looked at his cool, mocking face.

"As a man, I am not supposed to have been a saint all my life. With a woman it is different. That little affair of yours with Hal Mor—"

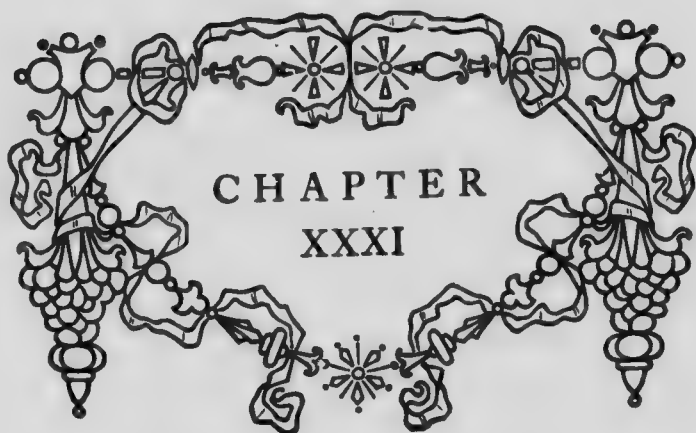
"Hush!"

The Prophetess was now thoroughly discomfited. Her imperious airs had gone. She fairly cringed with fear. Whatever it was, Bodell evidently knew something she desired to hide, and that knowledge placed her completely in his power.



Then they talked of other things, speaking in such a low tone that not even a whisper could be heard beyond themselves.

After a time Mrs. Maitland returned; but Bodell remained a few minutes longer, then leaving the hostess and her guest to their own delightful companionship.



WE have it on the best authority that, among the mysteries of life, none is more wonderful than "the way of a man with a maid." That may be. But what of the way of a maid with a man? For at best a man lives much in the open. Neither can his best friends affirm that he is not awkward, clumsy, only a coarse tinkerer, with a positive genius for blundering and mistakes. Except in the rarest instances, he knows nothing whatever of finesse, while his most graceful movements in affairs of the heart are as heavy and lumbering as the friskings of an overgrown cow. On the other hand, the woman is elusive, delicate, subtle, a perfect combination of nature and art, and so far in advance of the man as to suggest a distinct creation.

And, now that we come to think of it, was not such the case? In the beginning man was slowly evolved, developed from insensate clay to conscious being. But the woman was not evolved; for when the man awoke from a dull, heavy sleep,

he found her waiting for him, alert, bright, keen, ready for the glory and mystery of life. So, from the first, man has been at a disadvantage. What, then, could Robert Warriston do with Zona Dobbins? It is true Zona had never been East, not even as far as Chicago. The customs common in great cities were utterly unknown to her. A stray paper left in the stage, or given to Hank Dobbins by some traveler, was her only glimpse of the great life which pulsed along the Eastern Coast. She was untrained in the wisdom of the Egyptians, and knew as little of the New York social code as of the court customs of Rameses the Third.

But she had bright black eyes, which at times could be strangely alluring. She had fresh sweet lips, from which pouts and smiles would come like drops from a rosebush. She had a way of drawing up that lissome figure of hers which would have made a Newport belle turn green with envy. She could arch her neck as gracefully as a bird, and with seemingly the same unconsciousness. One moment she could droop her eyes with their long, heavy lashes, set her features most demurely, and look like a young nun preparing for an interview with the mother superior; the next moment her eyes would be sparkling with mischief, her face glowing with mysterious joy, and her entire bearing as that of an Italian sprite. For her dark, passionate type of beauty she was indebted to her father; but this was tempered by an expression of simplicity and tenderness, a

special inheritance from her mother. She was not old enough to know anything of the sorrow and burden of love, and, never having read any thrilling legends of the handsome knight, the beautiful maiden, the cruel father, and the terrible villain, her knowledge in sentimental lore was somewhat limited. And yet Robert Warriston had not been a full week in Cutty Hunk before Zona had him in leading chains, and a more willing, obedient captive no woman ever possessed.

Hence, we repeat—though love is not the least need of it—wonderful is the way of a maid with a man.

Robert, however, had not forgotten any part of his mission to Cutty Hunk. But, from the decisive measures taken by Carlisle, it was evident that the Warriston interests were in safe hands. Robert's special business now was to keep close watch on the conspirators. He knew they had tried to tamper with Mr. Grey, the superintendent. He also knew that money had been spent among certain of the miners, with the hope of inciting them to violence. It was very clear that Bodell and his associates were playing for high stakes, and to obtain even temporary possession of the mines would take desperate chances.

An attempt had been made to steal the records from the registry office. Failing in this, a fire was started in the building where the deeds were kept. But Mr. Dolphin, who was in close touch with most of the Bodell schemes, managed to send warnings of both movements.

Then, one night, several masked men attempted an interview with Hank Dobbins, selecting the loneliest part of the road, between San Gabriel and Cr ssena. Being modest men, desirous also that Hank should not be embarrassed with company, they chose a night for this interview when he had no passengers, the stage carrying only the mail-bag and a number of parcels.

Two men who were lounging about in a careless way at the stage-office in San Gabriel exchanged significant glances as Hank drove off without any passengers, after which they abruptly disappeared. The mail-bag that day was heavy, much heavier than usual, for Mr. Grey told Hank he was expecting a lot of mail from New York. When Hank reached a certain turn in the road, he slowed up, allowing the horses to walk; then he brought them to a standstill while he lighted his pipe. This done, he looked up and down the road, after which he gave a peculiar whistle, when three men came out from a clump of trees, and hastily entered the stage. One of these men strongly resembled Mr. Grey; another had a marked resemblance to Robert Warriston; while the third distinctly favored a crony of Hank Dobbins, who often came over on the stage with him. Each one carried a rifle, and it is highly probable that a business-like revolver had its place in each equipment. Before leaving San Gabriel, Hank had shut the stage windows, drawing down the curtains as well, a usual proceeding of his when he had no passengers.

During the early afternoon, and towards evening, conversation was freely carried on, Hank opening the little window at the top, through which passengers communicated with him; but when he gave a certain sign, all was still.

Just about sundown a couple of horsemen passed the stage, looking at it keenly as they went by. Seeing Hank was alone on the box seat, and the stage curtains down, one of them remarked, "Not overcrowded this trip?"

"Can't always have a crowd," Hank answered, glancing sharply at the man who spoke.

In a few minutes the stage had the road to itself, the two horsemen having disappeared, as they were evidently in a hurry.

Not being altogether bereft of creature comforts, the occupants of the stage indulged in a good, substantial meal shortly before dark. Then pipes were lit, each man getting down on the coach floor and putting his head under the seat while doing so, careful not to let the light be seen. Of the four comprising the party, two were seemingly unconcerned, Hank and his friend from Cutty Hunk. Mr. Grey, though a brave and at times a daring man, was more nervous than he would care to say. An honest, open fight he did not fear; but highwaymen and road-agents were tricky and dangerous. He was also well aware that his refusal to fall in with the Bodell schemes had made him a mark, at which deliberate aim would be taken. He smoked his pipe in a quick, nervous way, though mindful of his rifle.

Robert Warriston was in a state of eager excitement. He was measurably familiar with a gun, for he had shot at birds, clay pigeons, and even small game, at different times; but to shoot a man, the man meantime having a chance to shoot at him, was a new experience; and, if the truth must be told, Robert had less desire to begin the shooting than when this stage-ride was first proposed. There were several things he hadn't thought of in the beginning, which now occurred to him. The other man—his unknown, unseen antagonist—had some important advantages in his favor. The stage was a big thing to shoot at. The other man would likely be behind a tree. Hank was supposed to be alone, thus giving confidence to the attacking party. Then these men knew every turn and bend of the road, and had an option when the firing should begin. Being in the stage cooped up, while the others were free, gave them varied opportunities for strategy.

In his early boyhood Robert had ambitions for the life of a Texan ranger, imagining himself riding across the plains, his horse going like the wind, his long hair streaming picturesquely from under his sombrero, spurs at his heels, pistols at his belt, the perfect embodiment of heroic daring and manly grace. But to sit in a stage-coach on a dark night, with a chance of being riddled by men shooting from behind a tree or a ledge of rock, did not appeal to Robert's sense of the humorous.

But Hank smoked with as much concern

as if at his own fireside. His eyes, though, cut their way through the darkness like those of an Indian, and his ears were strained to catch every sound. At length he heard, above the rumble of the heavy stage, the sound of horses' hoofs. Stooping down to the little window, he said:

"They are coming. Get ready!"

In a moment the three men were in position, Hank's friend climbing up beside him on the seat, Mr. Grey and Robert each opening a window, through which their rifle-barrels projected slightly.

Mr. Dolphin had sent word that three or four men might make this attack, but Hank thought half a dozen were concerned in it.

There is not much ceremony in matters of this kind. No cavalier comes forward in advance of his fellows to announce the beginning of hostilities. The only intimation Hank had of any intended courtesy was a gruff "Hands up!" accompanied by a shot, intended chiefly to emphasize the demand; for these men were more anxious to get possession of the mail than harm either the stage or its driver.

But Hank and his friend, though regretting the omission of such formalities as might have been proper under the circumstances, did not allow their regrets to interfere with an immediate response, so the "Hands up!" had hardly been spoken before the speaker was "Hands down," Hank's shot taking the man, his friend's taking the horse.

Seeing that Hank meant serious resistance,

but having no knowledge of his allies in the stage, or the one beside him on the seat—for it was pitch dark—they attempted to surround the coach; careful, though, of Hank's gun, for they knew what it was.

This brought them in range of Mr. Grey and Robert Warriston, and Robert, now that the fight was on, had lost his nervousness and fear. Watching his chance, Robert fired, and with instant results, for his shot was followed by a yell as if some one had been badly wounded. Mr. Grey, on his side, was not so fortunate; but his second shot made up for the failure of the first, the bullet plowing its way through the horse's neck into the groin of its rider, causing the horse to rear in awful agony, throwing the man senseless to the ground.

Thus ended the fray, and well it might; for three of the attacking party were wounded, while it seemed to the others that Hank had a stage-load of trained fighters. So the remnant beat a speedy retreat.

Robert Warriston, not being familiar with Western ways, thought it strange of Hank Dobbins to drive off, leaving the wounded men on the road, but Hank merely said:

"A fight's a fight. When it's over, that's the end of it. Some men won't be around to-morrow—some men won't be around any more. But that's their affair, not mine."

After driving slowly for over a mile, and seeing no prospect of any further trouble, Hank gave

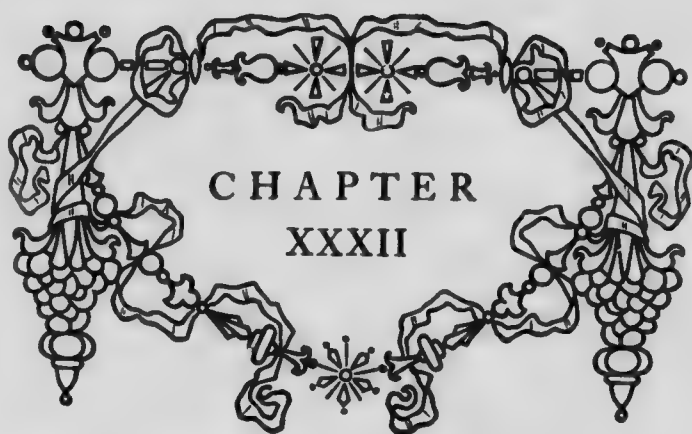
the reins to his Cutty Hunk friend, and, taking out his pipe, proceeded to fill it, then smoked as coolly as if nothing unusual had happened. He had intimated, when leaving Cutty Hunk the day before, that he might have a little trouble on the return trip, but spoke in such a careless way that neither Zona nor her mother felt any special anxiety. But ugly rumors came up from the mines. Some men who had been giving trouble were not anywhere about. Three men whom Mr. Grey summarily discharged had also disappeared. Certain threats were now recalled. It began to be known that important documents relating to the mines were expected from New York. Then the secret departure of Mr. Grey and Robert Warriston meant a fear of serious trouble somewhere. So, as the day wore on, the anxiety in the Dobbins household became very manifest, deepening every hour. More than a dozen times Zona had gone to the gate, listening intently; for the stage had a heavy rumble, and in the still evening air could be heard fully a mile off. Hank was usually within a few minutes of his time; not twice in a year would he be a quarter of an hour late. Men could almost set their watches by the stage, so prompt and regular was its coming in.

But on this night the terrible minutes dragged slowly by, reaching to a full hour before the sound of the stage was heard. Then came the next question, asked anxiously by both mother and daughter, but which neither could answer, "Were all safe and well?"

Knowing Mr. Grey was desirous that neither Robert nor himself should be known to have any part in this affair, Zona did not go out to the gate when the stage stopped, but stood inside the door, eagerly waiting. Hence, when Robert came in, which he did hurriedly, she was standing there trembling with excitement.

Then happened the most natural thing imaginable. Robert opened his arms. Zona sprang into them. Robert stooped down to kiss her; she flung her arms around his neck. For a space not to be counted by clock-ticks, Robert forgot all about the fight on the road from San Gabriel, and Zona no longer remembered the distress and anxiety of the last twelve hours.

After all, few experiences in life are richer in real joy than the way of a maid with a man.



MR. BODELL was an artist in lying. For a lie that stood up gaunt and bare, like a telegraph-pole, he had positive contempt. A lie that had to be kept going bicycle fashion, or it would fall of its own weight, only excited his anger. A coarse, clumsy lie, over which people were bound to stumble, seemed to him like mending a lady's pocket-handkerchief with a bit of sail-cloth, or darning a piece of delicate lace with grocer's twine. By the mere displacement of a word, or even false emphasis, Mr. Bodell could produce a superb lie, one which had in it the very genius of falsehood. When he said, "Miss Aylesbury had taken to work altar-cloth, teach mission children, and was fast assuming the proportions of a saint," the blade of his statement was as sharp a lie as was ever forged, while the handle had just enough truth in it for his fingers to take hold of. A point-blank falsehood he rarely indulged in, unless driven to it.

Indeed, so carefully had he followed this

course, that many regarded him as a most truthful man. Hence his remarks concerning Miss Aylesbury found immediate lodgment in the heart of Mrs. Maitland. The Prophetess, though detesting Miss Aylesbury, did not accept Mr. Bodell as Mrs. Maitland did.

Thanks to Austin Tremaine and the kindly, generous applications made possible by his teachings, Geneva was finding more to interest and occupy her than in former days. Her eyes were being opened to new duties, and obligations which she had hitherto ignored were now taking their proper place. Hence her life, instead of being a solitary wire stretching along a barren roadway, was beginning to relate itself to other lives, each as definite as her own.

Mr. Tremaine called one evening with Stephen Derwent, as he was desirous of having Stephen submit to Miss Aylesbury plans for a new chapter-house. This was the first time Stephen had called, but the fault did not attach to him, for he certainly desired to do so. But, so far, no opportunity had presented itself. He was very grateful, therefore, for Mr. Tremaine's invitation, and, as he had made the rough draft of the plans, the suggestion that he explain them to Miss Aylesbury was promptly accepted.

Stephen spent a full hour, and more, at his toilet that evening. He tried on every suit in his wardrobe, except his common, every-day gear. Never did neckties so absorb his thought. Both gaslights, one on each side of his mirror, were

in full flare all the time he was dressing. He looked at himself at every angle possible in that room. Sometimes he would come so close to the mirror that he could almost "touch noses," then he would back away to the wall opposite. He brushed his hair up, and he brushed it down. He pulled his cuffs out until they half covered his hands, then he pushed them back, leaving about one inch visible. That was an anxious time with Stephen, and yet he was neither vain nor conceited.

Nor was he the only one who spent some time that evening in various attitudes and forms of reflection. Geneva Aylesbury was equally guilty, choosing her dress with extra care, and so robing her gracious figure that it would appear to the best advantage.

How foolish they both were!

What concern was it of Stephen Derwent that he should look handsome and gallant in Miss Aylesbury's eyes? Was not she the daughter of Jacob Aylesbury, and chosen by her father as the future bride of Mr. Wamphrey? And what concern was it of Geneva Aylesbury that Stephen Derwent should regard her as beautiful and attractive? Was not he a mere teller in the bank of which her father was a director, and Mr. Wamphrey the president. O dear! how foolish young people sometimes are!

At first there was a slight feeling of constraint, but this passed off after a time.

"You are fond of music, Mr. Derwent," Geneva

said, when he had spoken of a place in the proposed parish-house where the choir might meet for rehearsal.

"Very, though my personal efforts in that direction have never been fully appreciated."

"You sing?" she inquired, cautiously, suspecting latent mischief in his reply.

"Never but once to the same audience," he said, gravely.

"All great artists have their peculiarities," she answered, with equal seriousness.

"But, however willing I might be, there are objections which so far I have not been able to overcome."

"And these are?"

"The listeners," interjected Tremaine, taking advantage of Miss Aylesbury's intentional pause.

"Mr. Derwent, having studied under the renowned Mr. Droner, can not expect New York barbarians to appreciate him all at once. Mr. Droner's methods are so pronounced that only the highly endowed can understand them," Mr. Tremaine added.

"And who, pray, is Mr. Droner?" Miss Aylesbury asked.

"Mr. Tremaine's choir-master," Stephen said.

"Mr. Derwent's music-teacher, and the marvel of Ridgeburg," Tremaine said.

"Never having heard until now of either Ridgeburg or Mr. Droner, I must ask for a more definite reply," Miss Aylesbury said, smilingly.

Stephen then told her where Ridgeburg was,

of the little meeting-house where Mr. Droner exercised his peculiar gifts, Tremaine adding a word here and there; so, between them, Geneva was much amused.

"Such a beautiful place, that is, as described," the parenthesis with a smile, "ought to attract many of our city people," she remarked.

"Ridgeburg is very fortunate in that respect," Tremaine said, "only a limited circle has discovered it."

"Then the woman with ten trunks, two servants, and one poodle-dog has not yet descended upon it?" Geneva questioned.

"Not yet, for which we are all devoutly thankful," Stephen replied.

"Nor the mother with an army of marriageable daughters in search of sons-in-law?"

"Still happily absent."

"Nor the woman with the unfortunate nurse and the infuriating child; the child a terror by day, and a horror by night?"

"Not yet, of which fact special mention is made in our Thanksgiving services."

"Nor the young Miss just emerged from short frocks, who simpers, giggles, and languishes yearningly?"

"Her absence adds two lines to the Ridgeburg doxology."

"Nor the advanced female, the woman with views, the strong-minded, progressive, fetter-bursting female?"

"Her failure to appear has made the Hallelu-

jah Chorus more familiar in Ridgeburg than Yankee Doodle."

"One of the New York families discovered Ridgeburg this season," Tremaine said.

"The advance guard of the barbarians," Miss Aylesbury suggested.

"No, indeed," Stephen promptly replied; "the Warristons are not of that type."

"What Warristons do you mean?" Geneva eagerly inquired.

"Fred Westerhall's relations," Tremaine answered.

"Not Mr. Warriston and Eleanor?" she asked, greatly surprised at Mr. Tremaine's reply.

"Yes; for when I saw Fred the other day he told me he had gone with Mr. and Miss Warriston to Albany, and that they were the same people I had met in Ridgeburg."

"Speaking of the Warristons reminds me," said Stephen, "that I had a letter from my father this morning in which he says Mr. Warriston is much better, and that Miss Warriston has been to see Squire Bodell two or three times. He sent for her, it seems. He was very sick, you remember, when we were in Ridgeburg."

Stephen looked at Tremaine as he spoke.

"I met a Mr. Bodell at Saratoga, and also since I came home. Any relation of his, I wonder?" Geneva asked.

Tremaine did not accept the question as belonging to him, leaving Stephen to answer it as best he could.

"I never saw Squire Bodell," Stephen answered, ruthfully, which served to break a silence somewhat awkward.

The conversation then took another turn, Bodell's name not being mentioned again during the evening.

After her visitors had gone, Geneva resolved upon an immediate visit to Ridgeburg. She understood thoroughly why Eleanor Warriston had not replied to her urgent letters. The only course open now to her was to go to Ridgeburg and see if there was not something which she could do for the Warristons. Possessing much of her father's energy, she soon made such preparations as were necessary; so, early next morning, a cab was at the door of the Aylesbury house, and in less than an hour she was in the train, speeding towards Ridgeburg.

When Mr. Bodell called that evening, he was informed that Miss Aylesbury had gone out of town.

This simple fact formed the ground-plan of his remarkable statement to the Prophetess and Mrs. Maitland, in which he made it appear that Miss Aylesbury had openly defied her father, said defiance leading to a general rupture in the Aylesbury home.

As a witness giving testimony in the case, Mr. Bodell's evidence was irrefragable. Miss Aylesbury had identified herself with Tremaine's Church. She had made a generous subscription to the new chapter-house. She was on pleasant

terms with the young clergyman. She did refuse to consider Mr. Wamphrey in the light of a possible husband. She did differ with her father concerning Mr. Wamphrey's desire, and she had gone out of town. No amount of cross-questioning could detect a flaw in this deposition. The twelve good and true men who represent the massive intelligence of a court jury on such testimony would bring in a verdict without leaving the box.

Mr. Bodell was not a monolithic liar. That requires neither genius nor skill, simply brute force. He lied mosaic fashion, each statement true in itself but, when put together, forming a complete falsehood. With him lying was a science; it was art at its supreme altitude.

On arriving at the station, Geneva found Tom Lang waiting for the Ridgeburg mail. On learning that he was the stage-driver, she inquired if he knew the cottage occupied by the Warristons.

"Yes 'm," Tom answered, looking at her curiously.

"I wish to go there as soon as possible." As Geneva spoke, she handed Tom her trunk-check.

"Yes 'm."

Tom looked in a helpless kind of way at the trunk-check; then at the trunk which stood end up on the little platform, then at Miss Aylesbury, finally looking at the wagon which he had brought over that day instead of the usual stage. The trunk he could easily provide for by putting it into the body of the wagon with the mail-bag, a keg of nails, a barrel of sugar, and general sun-

dries intended for Simon Tibbetts. But what was he going to do with this elegantly-dressed young lady? His stage at best was not an imposing affair, but, as compared with the wagon, it was a Pullman coach in comparison with a freight-car. Tom therefore was not a little embarrassed.

Holding the trunk-check between his fingers, he went to the other side of the station, hoping to find the doctor's buggy, which had passed him in coming from Ridgeburg, or a carriage of some sort; but not a vehicle except his own was anywhere in sight. As Tom had backed his wagon up against the platform, 'tting down the tail-board, the station agent, being an obliging fellow, had rolled in the sugar barrel and keg of nails, putting on the other goods as well; so when Tom returned from his search for the doctor's buggy, his wagon was loaded and ready to start.

"I'm very sorry, ma'am, I have n't the stage here to-day, an'—"

"But I must get to Ridgeburg, and as soon as possible," Geneva said, not waiting for Tom to end his sentence.

"I can take you to Ridgeburg," Tom answered, speaking slowly and with evident embarrassment, "only I've nothing here but my wagon, an' I'm afeared you won't find it comfortable."

As Tom spoke, his eyes mournfully traveled along the platform to where his wagon stood, which caused Miss Aylesbury to do the same. Her idea of a wagon was not very definite. She thought it a smaller type of wagonette. But when

she saw Tom Lang's wagon, her views on such matters were materially changed. Still, what could she do? This was the best Tom could offer. Whereupon she gave Mr. Lang a bright, good-humored smile, and said:

"This will do very nicely."

Tom smiled gratefully in return, and proceeded to arrange the seat, making it fairly comfortable. Fortunately he had a good carriage-robe; so, after helping her up to the wagon-seat, he spread the robe in such a way that it gave her a fair measure of exclusiveness, also protected her skirts from contact with the wheel. This done, he got the trunk, giving it the place of honor near the sugar-barrel. Then, seeing that everything was snug and safe, he took his place beside Miss Aylesbury, sitting well over on his side of the wagon, to avoid crowding his lady passenger.

Perched up on that high seat, with her shapely head set even more firmly than usual, her graceful figure richly but quietly clad, the cool, crisp air giving a tinge of color to her cheeks, the novelty of the situation adding fresh brightness to her eyes, Miss Aylesbury suggested various forms of both reflection and remark to such people as she met on her way from the station.

For the first mile or so little was said, Tom asking once or twice "if she was sittin' comfortable." But as Geneva became accustomed to the wagon, and saw she was in no immediate danger of being thrown over the horses or against the sugar-barrel, she talked to Mr. Lang quite freely.

Seeing a large, stately house in the distance, she learned from Lang it was Squire Bodell's, Tom going on to speak of Miss Warriston's visits to the Squire. He had also much to say of Tremaine, and from the admiring view-point. Neither did he omit mention of Stephen Derwent, to whom he referred with some pride as "a mighty nice young man, not a bit stuck up, an' who was bound to get on."

When they were passing the Derwent home, which Tom pointed out, Geneva looked at it with peculiar interest. Then she thought of Stephen.

As they drew up to the Libby cottage, Eleanor, hearing the wagon stop, came to the door—for she was expecting some things from Mr. Tibbetts—when, to her amazement a young woman hastily scrambled from the wagon-seat, and came running up the little path. In another instant it was:

"O Eleanor!"

"O Geneva!"

Then they kissed each other, embraced each other, talked at each other, and finally, with arms around each other's waists, went into the cottage.

Tom Lang meanwhile had taken the trunk from its honored place in the wagon, and, bringing it to the side door, drove off to report proceedings at Tibbetts's store.



FOR some reason Mrs. Maitland renewed her vows of allegiance to the Prophetess, and, as an atonement for her former waywardness, she gave herself with supreme devotion to the cause of her august guest. The light and flippant way in which she had once spoken of the Prophetess was abandoned. She also introduced her to a number of upper-class Gothamites, thus enlarging the ministry and swelling the purse of her gifted teacher. Under these circumstances, what could be more natural than for Mr. Bodell to call frequently at Mrs. Maitland's? For he also had prominently identified himself with the sublime utterances of Mrs. Deveral. But his Sundays were usually spent at the Old King Cole, where he was always a leading figure.

Once Tremaine's name came up in the club, incidentally though, the real theme of the conversation being Mr. Wamphrey; but this led naturally to the Aylesburys, finally involving Tremaine.

"Tremaine! I've heard of him, of course; so

has every man whose office is open to whining letters and begging circulars. A big, lazy lout, I take it, with more body than brains, able though to feather his own nest."

"But, Bodell," one of the King Cole's remarked, "they say he is a smart, wide-awake fellow, writes for one of the dailies, lectures on art, and is one of the brightest men in town."

"Almost thou persuadest me to become a Tremanian!" Bodell sneered, showing his sharp, white teeth. "How long is it since you became an authority on petticoat parsons? Gentlemen," he continued, now rising from his chair, a cruel smile on his face, "allow me to present Tom Barnes, of Barneyville, a lamb just entering the fold, but whose fleece is not as white as snow."

Barnes had no desire to quarrel with Bodell; but there was an angry glitter in his eye and a look on his face which were ominous. But Bodell, conscious of his strength, and enraged at Barnes for taking Tremaine's part, determined to punish him to the last degree. Therefore he remained standing, and proceeded to fill his glass from a bottle on the table before him, inviting the others to do the same; then he said:

"St. Barney does n't sound so well as St. John or St. Paul. But after a time it will go all right. Gentlemen, let us do special honor to this toast by standing. So I give you 'St. Barney,' the response to be made by the Saint himself."

In a reckless but good-humored way the group rose, when the newly-canonized saint responded

by throwing his glass straight into Bodell's face, and with force enough to make an ugly gash in his cheek, the wine meanwhile spilling all over him. With a cry like that of a wild beast, Bodell leaped at Barnes; but Barnes was one of those dangerous men whom anger only steadies and empowers. He therefore met Bodell with a stinging blow in the mouth, then caught him at the throat, holding him with the grip of a bulldog.

Everything was done so quickly that those standing by hardly realized what was taking place. Meantime that terrible hand of Barnes was tightening in its grasp, so that Bodell's eyes almost bulged out of their sockets, his face had become a deep purple, and blood streamed from his nostrils. Then there was a general rush to separate the angry men, when Barnes, with a strength simply amazing, drew Bodell up close to him, then with a sudden push sent him tumbling to the floor, where he lay stunned and bleeding.

No one in the Old King Cole suspected that, when Barnes awoke that morning, he remembered it was the anniversary of his mother's death. He had n't thought of her for some time, but on this morning his mind was full of her. He got out her picture, one he had not seen for months, and sat holding it in his hands while he looked wistfully into her patient face. Then he read several of the last letters she had written him, and more than once his lip trembled at her sweet, tender words. The church-bells rang as he sat in his lonely room, and they seemed to bring back his

boyhood when he went with his mother to the village church, and he could almost hear her voice again uniting in the responses or joining in the hymns. How plainly everything came back to him! What hopes she had of him as he came up to early manhood, and with what pride she used to speak of his future! And now she was dead. Ten years ago he had taken his last look at the face of the truest and most generous heart he would ever know. But before she died he had caused the iron to enter her soul, and the last words that fell from her lips were in prayer for him. Later in the day he went to the club, and tried to drown his remorse in drink. But when Bodell gave such a turn to the conversation, ending up with allusions too plain to be misunderstood, the memory of his dead mother and the bitter consciousness of his lost manhood drove him to a condition bordering upon frenzy.

Bodell was quickly raised from the floor, and carried to a couch, where he lay for a few minutes, breathing heavily, as if strangling. Some one then unfastened his collar, and his neck was seen to be swollen and discolored, giving evidence of the remorseless grip with which Barnes had held it. Then another one washed the blood from his face, while still another prepared strips of court-plaster for the ugly gash which the glass had made.

In a few minutes he opened his eyes in a dazed, bewildered way, then placed his hand under his head to relieve it, seemingly, from terrible pain. This caused the now sobered Colers to examine

his head, revealing a severe wound, the result of his striking against a chair as he fell. A basin of warm water was brought, and the wound bathed, the matted hair removed to make way for strips of plaster, after which he was taken upstairs to one of the club bedrooms.

As a club, the King Colers did not approve of what Mr. Barnes had done; but, as individual members, almost every man took occasion to say to him, "You served Bodell just right, and I am glad you did it." This proves conclusively that corporations have no souls.

In the early evening Mr. Bodell sent a note to Mrs. Maitland. Eagerly opening it, she read:

"DEAR MRS. MAITLAND,—I am exceedingly sorry I can not keep my appointment at your home this evening. But I am called out of town, and may be absent several days. This is a sad disappointment to me; but as I am acting for others in some important interests, I am compelled to leave at once. Be good enough to convey my regrets to Mrs. Deverall.

"With kindest regards, I am, dear Mrs. Maitland,

Most sincerely yours,

JAMES BODELL."

Having disposed of Mrs. Maitland's invitation, Bodell sent for some of his special cronies who were in the King Cole parlors, and, with their help and sundry bottles of wine, he spent two or three boisterous hours. But though they sang

funny songs and told funny stories, and made themselves as silly as drunken men usually do, Bodell felt that Barnes was the real hero of the club, and had the sympathies even of the men who were carousing and roystering in his room.

During the season, in feeble imitation of certain literary folk, Mrs. Maitland held an informal reception every Sunday evening. But when a woman has seldom anything to give her guests except that which can be eaten from a plate or taken with a spoon, her attempts at literary brilliance rarely attain positive success. Still the plate and the spoon have often more to do with assembling a company than anything else. But on this particular evening the Prophetess was expected to speak on the "Tyranny of Marriage," and in the presence of such a theme and such a speaker plates and spoons were not of much consequence.

It must be conceded that an overwhelming majority of those present knew nothing experimentally of the theme proposed for discussion. It is probable that many of the spinsters at this gathering—perhaps all of them—would have been willing to ascertain for themselves the awful depths of this tyranny; but no one had asked them to make this sacrifice. Indeed, it might be safely affirmed that these spinsters had left no means untried by which they might enter this dreadful tyranny under which so many groaned and suffered.

From an artistic standpoint, few of these heroic females embodied the poet's dream of fair

women; neither did they represent the highest ideal of the female form divine. Some of them were long and thin; others were short and stout. Some had high cheekbones, counterbalanced by depressed noses; while others projected their noses defiantly.

As the Prophetess did not make her appearance until it could be done with high dramatic effect, a fair damsel of uncertain age executed something on the piano, to which no one listened except those who had no opportunity of talking. The execution was brilliant but painful, the only person enjoying it being the executioner. So they were all glad when it was over, clapping their hands, and giving other expressions of their joy. These demonstrations, however, the damsel misinterpreted; for she immediately began executing something else, slamming and banging the piano most vigorously. This gave the others further opportunity of talking, which they at once accepted. When this second subject had been disposed of in a grand crash, with could be heard two blocks distant, the talkers once more applauded, but feebly, lest it might again be misunderstood.

Then Fred Westerhall read a poem. Fred had not been at Mrs. Maitland's for some time. He did not like the Prophetess, being convinced she was not only a humbug, but an arrant fraud. But, the day before, Tom Allen brought him an urgent request from Mrs. Maitland to come and read a selection of his own writings.

Fred had several points of advantage over the

ordinary poet—he was well-dressed, good-looking, and unmarried; neither did he write poetry for a living. As Westerhall's poems have gone through numerous editions, giving him a place in literature of world-wide recognition, the selection he gave at Mrs. Maitland's need not be transcribed here. But never was poet more gratefully rewarded for the outpourings of his genius. With difficulty some of the spinsters refrained from embracing him then and there. Had he suggested such a thing, a number of them would have eagerly followed him into the land of bondage, concerning which the Prophetess would soon utter her words of warning. Fred was the hero of the hour; but meekly bearing his blushing honors which fell thick upon him, he resumed his seat. Then a hush came upon the company. All talking ceased. Not even a whisper profaned the stillness. Eyes drooped in awed expectation, while hearts beat nervously. Then the Prophetess appeared, walking slowly but ponderously to the chair which had been reserved for her. Robed in black satin, a black lace shawl, the gift of an ardent devotee, flung loosely over her shoulders, carrying a fan as a marshal his baton, her bearing was most imposing. Having seated herself with dignity, and calmly surveyed the expectant company, she began:

"We are here to speak of the 'Tyranny of Marriage.' But let us first define marriage. Tyranny needs no definition, it defines itself; but marriage, being the common lot of all, is universally misunderstood."

As an opening sentence, this was admirable. Making marriage a common lot, which no one could possibly escape, she at once found favor with the spinsters, suggesting possibilities of much comfort.

"Marriage in its ideal state is only a relation of soul. Two souls may live in sweet, blissful marriage without having even seen each other. Yea, the soul with which some other soul is wedded may never have been in this world at all."

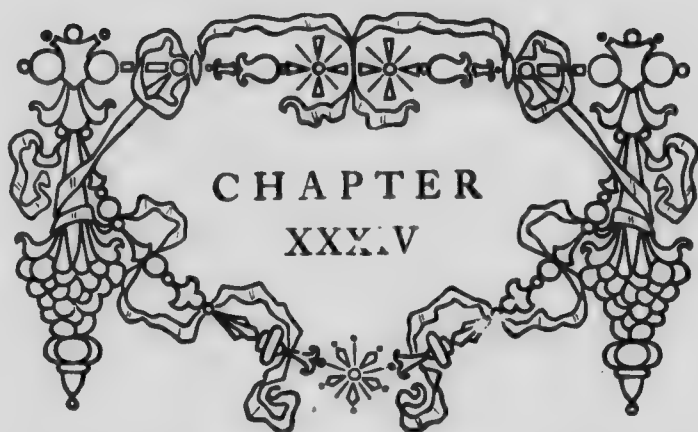
Another happy sentence; for it explained why no bridal veil had been required for so many in that company. Their spiritual spouse had not yet favored this world with his presence.

"What is marriage as commonly understood? A coarse, vulgar relationship; a contract drawn up by the State, having penalties attached; a tyranny on the part of the man, a degradation on the part of the woman; a relation into which no real man would ever enter, and a condition to which no real woman would ever submit."

Remembering the mantelpiece, against which she had once come to grief, the Prophetess was less demonstrative than before, using her fan this time to supplement her eloquence. For over half an hour she continued in this strain.

Tora Allen, on his way home with Fred Westershall, said "he had never heard quite so much rot at any one time in all his life."

"Double-distilled rot," was Fred's addition to this remark.



AFTER leaving the Libby cottage on the evening of Miss Aylesbury's arrival in Ridgeburg, Tom Lang went to Tibbetts's store with the mail. Of course, he spoke of the lady who had come to visit the Warristons, exciting considerable curiosity among the customers.

"A reg'lar high stepper, an' no mistake," Tom said, admiringly; "an' a beauty, too. I thought she'd be provoked when I told her I had n't anything but the wagon; but she just smiled, and said 't would be all right. She's none of yer airy ones. An', golly wash! but she did ask me a heap of questions; how long I'd been stagin', the sort of people we get here summer-time; how often I brought the mails, and 'most anythin' else. Then we got to talking about Mr. Tremaine—she goes to his church in New York—an' about Stephen Derwent. She often sees him in the bank."

Mrs. Droner, who sometimes came to the stores in the evening, leaving Mr. Droner to look after the little Droners—a service for which he

had various qualifications—here asked a question which was strictly feminine. Mrs. Tibbetts, who was at the other end of the store, heard Mrs. Droner's question, and came forward to catch the answer.

"Well, I 'm sure I dunno," Tom said. "You 've got me now, Mrs. Droner. Women's dresses ain't much in my line; but I can tell you she looked real picture-like, sittin' up there on the wagon, her eyes shinin' like two stars, and her cheeks the color of peaches. But you 'll see her for yourself, Mrs. Droner, an' you too, Mrs. Tibbetts, for she 's goin' to stay a spell at the Warristons'; she told me so herself."

Next morning Geneva went over to Tibbetts's store with Eleanor, and in less than five minutes so completely had she captured Mr. Tibbetts, that he was ready to turn the store upside down or inside out, just as she desired.

She had often heard of a country store with its aggregation of drygoods, crockery, hardware, groceries; in short, everything imaginable and much unimaginable. And she was girl enough to enjoy the novelty of it, looking first at one thing, then at another, and asking Mr. Tibbetts all manner of questions. Of course, she had to be weighed, standing on the scale while Mr. Tibbetts attended to the weights. Then she insisted on Eleanor going through the same performance, laughing at her for weighing less than she did. As Mr. Tibbetts was not embarrassed with business at the time, they had a free run of the store. Geneva

made good use of those bright eyes of hers, and her nimble wits were busily engaged. She had discovered already that the burden of the Warristons' home rested entirely upon Eleanor, and it was her purpose to relieve that burden.

After this she came over frequently to the Tibbetts store, giving her orders with a directness which caused the worthy Simon both anxiety and pleasure—anxiety to fill the orders exactly as they were given, and pleasure in the quantity which she ordered.

She soon became acquainted with the Derwents, taking to Abram at once. His quaint, dry humor was a delight to her. When he came up for his evening chat in the Libby cottage, she would look eagerly for the funny little twinkle in his eyes, and that peculiar smile which suggested even more than he said.

At first she was a little shy with Mrs. Derwent, but without the slightest reason, for a more kind or motherly soul never breathed. It is probable that Mrs. Derwent could never have written a poem or composed an oratorio, while, as for art, her noblest achievement in that line was a sampler, worked when she was very young, which her proud, fond mother had framed, that it might be handed down to admiring generations. As

A female struggling for her right,

A female eager for a fight,

A female clamoring in the night,

Mrs. Derwent was a hopeless failure. But as a sweet, gentle, kindly woman, her name in Ridge-

burg was as ointment poured forth, and precious ointment at that.

It was strange, therefore, that Geneva should be timid almost to bashfulness in her presence; for under ordinary circumstances Geneva was not noted for timidity. The Prophetess did not consider her alarmingly bashful; for she had a keen memory of the cool, self-poised, and positively assured young lady who openly and audaciously defied her at Saratoga. Neither would Mrs. Maitland have given her a certificate naming timidity and bashfulness as her chief virtues; for she had often envied the easy, graceful way in which Geneva would put aside presuming admirer, or ward off an intended. As for Bodell, he raged in his heart when he thought of her. She met him with an indifference so perfect that her dislike did not even reveal itself. Hatred he could endure easily, but such contempt as hers maddened him. And yet in the presence of Mrs. Derwent she was singularly quiet and restrained. But the mystery is easy of solution when we remember that Mrs. Derwent was Stephen's mother.

Ruth, of course, came in for a measure of observation, Geneva having heard from Eleanor of Ruth's engagement to Tremaine. So, as a potential occupant of the pastor's pew, where she would be exposed to both curious and unfriendly eyes, Geneva studied Ruth with evident concern; but that dainty little maiden walked right into her heart.

During Geneva's visit to the Warristons, the

Derwents gave what was known in Ridgeburg as a tea-party. A simple affair, surely, this party was, and Mrs. Grammercy would have turned up her nose at the whole proceeding. Miss Harlem, being younger and usually more vulgar, would have laughed outright, not even sparing Mrs. Derwent's Dresden tea-service, which had been brought out specially for the occasion. The Countess of Tuxedo, whose father, to his honor be it said, had entered upon mercantile life by selling suspenders and shoelaces on Courtlandt Street sidewalk, would have stared haughtily around, then retired with an air of superb disdain.

It is true, the furniture was somewhat involved in appearance, and the dining-room could not be considered elegant. It is also true that the pictures were neither choice nor costly, and were probably premiums given by some weekly papers; for there was a fruit-piece in all the colors of the rainbow, and children impossible in either earth or sky. And it needed no special vision to discern a wooden-cased clock, with a glass door and a highly ornamental pendulum, occupying the center of the mantelpiece, ticking obtrusively, and striking even more so. Then, there was a stove standing out some feet from the wall, a brightly-polished affair, bearing sundry emblems of the founder's art, having also a crown of wondrous device. Withal the room looked cheerful and homelike, and, to Geneva, had a more inviting air than the lofty, spacious dining-room in the Aylesbury mansion.

As a tribute of respect to her guests, Mrs. Derwent wore her best silk dress, and, in doing this, she gave them signal proofs of her esteem; for this dress was an unheard-of piece of extravagance, and only worn on special occasions.

Abram was arrayed in his Sunday suit, one which had done duty in Ridgeburg for many years. Rarely wearing this suit, except when attending funerals or going to meeting, donning it meant an event of unusual importance.

The fact that Miss Aylesbury was acquainted with Stephen made her coming to the Derwents a matter of special interest, particularly to Mrs. Derwent, in whose heart Stephen was throned among such principalities and powers as represented the highest possibilities of manhood. Then the other fact, that she was a parishioner of Austin Tremaine caused Ruth to hail her coming with delight; for Tremaine was the sun in the sky of her heart, around which her affections, planetlike, steadily revolved.

At the table Geneva spoke of going occasionally to the Gotham Bank and the responsible position Stephen now held.

"You mean that Stephen will pay out thousands of dollars in a day?" Mrs. Derwent asked, so astonished that she held the teapot in her hand while looking at Geneva.

"Thousands sometimes in an hour," Geneva answered, smiling at the look of wonder in Mrs. Derwent's face.

"Well, I declare!" she said, putting the teapot

down, and passing a freshly-filled cup to Mr. War-riston, who sat beside her.

"What heaps of money Stephen has to take care of!" Mr. Derwent remarked, with a solemnity befitting his Sunday raiment.

But it was not the suit which caused Mr. Derwent to feel serious. He was thinking of that thousand-dollar package which Stephen had, and which should soon be paid to Mrs. Libby.

"But you know the proverb, 'Safe as the bank,'" Geneva said, looking at Mr. Derwent as she spoke.

"Still thieves sometimes get into a bank," the Sunday suit yet dominating his tone.

"Not into New York banks," Geneva answered, confidently.

Then she went on to speak of the vaults, the safes, the time-locks, the burglar-alarms, all of which had been explained when she went one day through the Gotham with her father.

"Is Mr. Aylesbury connected with the bank Stephen is in?" Abram asked.

"He is one of the directors."

She answered reluctantly, fearing the Derwents might attach some importance to this.

Whatever pride Geneva had—and it was considerable despite her easy, democratic ways at times—did not relate to her father's supposed wealth. Having reason to suppose that most of her father's possessions had been secured at the expense of his manhood and honor, she regarded them as a reproach, something for which she had

cause for shame. But the Derwents knew nothing of this; so Mrs. Derwent was more than pleased at having on her best silk gown, and also in bringing out her Dresden tea-service. She had imagined all along that Miss Aylesbury was a person of some consequence, but had not ranked her as a bank director's daughter. And a director of the Gotham!

Soon after, the conversation took a new turn, when Abram spoke of Mr. Tremaine.

"I wish he would preach in New York his Adam-and-Eve sermons. We never heard anything like them. Ridgeburg got a regular shaking up. Deacon Tompkins has n't recovered yet; and as for Josh Higgins—"

"Now, Abram," interposed Mrs. Derwent.

"You remember that sermon on the Woman and the Apple, Miss Warriston?" Abram went on, good-humoredly accepting his wife's interruption.

Eleanor's heart gave a great throb as Abram spoke. Then, in a series of flashes, her mind went back to things of which Mr. Derwent did not dream. Once more she was on the steamer looking out upon the silent night, the silence rudely broken by the taunting words: "Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now." With a rush, the memories of that terrible night returned when she sat through the dreary hours, waiting for the dawn to break in her soul. But she controlled herself sufficiently to answer Mr. Derwent, who then went on to speak of other parts of Mr. Tremaine's discourses.

But while Eleanor's thoughts wandered from Abram Derwent and his remarks concerning Tremaine, Ruth gave to him her undivided attention. She had heard all this before. Her father had spoken of these things again and again. At every available opportunity he took occasion to remark upon something Tremaine had said. And yet Ruth listened as to news from a far country. She watched every movement on her father's face, and followed him with an eagerness which was never relaxed.

Geneva saw this, and, while giving due attention to Mr. Derwent, she could not but observe the bright eyes, the flushed cheeks, the excited face of Ruth all the while her father was speaking of Tremaine. Geneva concluded that Ruth was very much in love with the young clergyman, and had given him every affection of which she was capable. Then she thought of Ruth's brother!

"I am glad you are acquainted with my Stephen," Mrs. Derwent said, when the company had adjourned to the parlor and Geneva was sitting beside her on the old-fashioned sofa.

"I shall be more acquainted with him now," Geneva answered, taking Mrs. Derwent's hand in hers, and holding it.

"He is a good boy, as faithful and true as was ever born," Mrs. Derwent said, speaking in a tone intended only for Geneva.

To this Geneva had no other reply than that conveyed by a gentle pressure of Mrs. Derwent's hand, which she still held in hers.

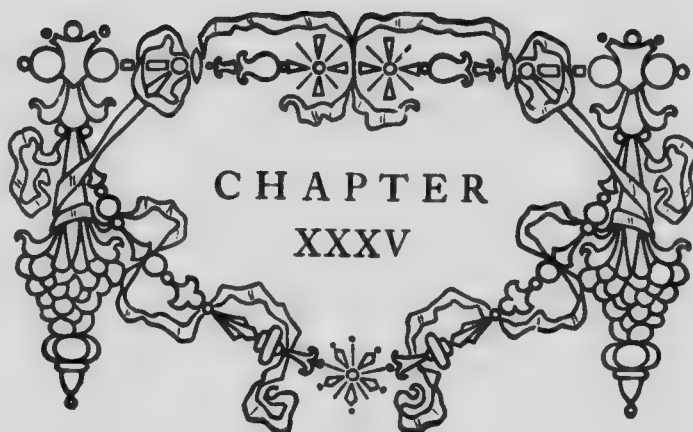


As Mr. Warriston was yet an invalid, the tea-party broke up earlier than is usual in Ridgeburg. When it came Geneva's turn to say good-night, Mrs. Derwent kissed her, and she in turn kissed Mrs. Derwent. But on the way to Libby cottage she thought of Stephen.

It was probably Abram Derwent's remark which suggested it, bringing everything vivid to her memory; but that night Eleanor opened her heart to Geneva respecting even Rodell's taunting words on the Albany steamer.

"The coward! The contemptible sneak! The infamous scoundrel!" Geneva exclaimed in horror. "And that wretch actually dared to make love to me!"

It was late when they retired; for the story was a long one, but both hearts were lighter, and both slept sweeter, and both awoke stronger and better when the next day dawned.



FOR reasons best known to the promoters, the Cutty Hunk Mining Company was incorporated in a neighboring State, where generous provision is made for such enterprises. Angry shareholders in various companies have affirmed that the State referred to is mainly concerned with the fees and taxes paid by promoters, and rarely makes an examination into the schemes which seek the sanction of its seal and charter. But shareholders often do not seem to understand that corporations and companies are promoted solely for the benefit of the promoters. The idea of a shareholder making money seldom occurs to any one but the shareholder himself. A shareholder is not supposed to make money; he is to hold shares, shares printed on parchment paper, handsomely engraved, adorned with various signatures, and representing potential values. To hold these without the disturbing thought of profit or dividend is the one function of the shareholder. It is for this purpose the shareholder exists. Any man who expects in-



terest or return for his investment is unworthy of being a shareholder. With the promoter it is entirely different. He simply promotes, not the company, but himself. His own business is to promote his own interests, and this he invariably does. Hence his name.

So the Cutty Hunk Mining Company was put under the fostering care of that noble commonwealth which seldom demeans itself by prying closely into the character of such concerns. But in this instance influences were at work which interfered with the plans of Mr. Bodell. He was delayed in various ways. State officials did not respond so promptly as at other times. Inquiries came to which he had to make definite reply. Men who had never given him the least trouble caused him much annoyance.

Perhaps if he had been in the office of Mr. Carlisle he might have understood the cause of "the law's delay, the insolence of office," and the other things so vividly set forth by a certain Hamlet, who had trouble of various kinds.

But Mr. Bodell did not think of Carlisle in this connection. He should, for Mr. Carlisle was thinking of him; and so was Mr. Craig. Mr. Dolphin had also a part in this business. Indeed, he was giving his undivided attention to Mr. Bodell.

Hence the affairs of Cutty Hunk made slow progress, much to the grief of the generous men who were so eager to invite an anxious public to become its subscribers. But no one so chafed under the delay as Mr. Strathford. Every week

added to his personal embarrassment. Men who had always waited on his convenience now became urgent in their demands. One or two little "flyers" did not turn out well, the market going the other way. He could not borrow, as that would make public his financial weakness, and this he was most anxious to avoid. The note he had made with Bodell troubled him; for such a thing was contrary to bank precedents. The delay, therefore, in Cutty Hunk matters seriously affected him.

Meanwhile Mrs. Strathford, unconscious of all these things, was rapidly attaining the goal of her social ambition. It was whispered that her private fortune admitted of handsome expenditure; that Mr. Strathford was possessed of large means, only remaining with the Gotham so he might be in vital touch with great corporations of which he was the virtual head. Once these rumors obtained credence, Mrs. Strathford's aspirations were cheerfully recognized. The Marchioness of Hoboken gave her place on her visiting list. Lady Castleton invited her to Castleton Hall. The Hon. Mrs. Lynbrook, not content with the usual cards for a distinguished function, called upon Mrs. Strathford, and personally urged the invitation. All this meant gowns, handsome gowns, "expensive gowns, with all the appurtenances thereof," as Mr. Craig would say. And it meant more than gowns; for Mrs. Strathford had to enlarge the circle of her entertainments, giving in return as she had received.

"I am very sorry Madison Duane can't come to-morrow evening," she said one morning after opening a letter, which, with a score of others, was beside her plate when she came down to breakfast. "He starts for Europe to-day. Very unexpected. Sends regrets and all the rest of it, but that does n't help me. He was to take Geneva Aylesbury in."

"Can't you change your plans, and get some one to take Duane's place?" Mr. Strathford suggested.

"Who can I get?"

"Is Bodell coming?"

"Certainly."

"Mr. Wamphrey?"

"No; he is out of town."

"Why not ask Derwent, one of our tellers? He is a good-looking young fellow, and Miss Aylesbury would find him fully as entertaining as Duane."

"Duane, I know, is stupid, hopelessly so; but he belongs to the Murray Hill set, and is in with the Hempstead fox-hunters. That suggestion of yours is not a bad one. I could n't ask Fulton or Desbrosses to come now. They would know the invitation was a mere stop-gap."

Stephen, therefore, was invited to the Strathfords, Mr. Strathford adding to his wife's note a word or two of his own.

Whatever fears Mrs. Strathford had regarding Stephen, they were soon dispelled; for he acquitted himself admirably, and accepted the situ-

ation with apparent ease. If the Castleton girls, both of whom were present, accompanied by their regal mamma, had once suspected that his dress suit was Tremaine's property, though it fitted Stephen as though made for him, they would not have been so gracious, nor smiled upon him so pleasantly; or if my lady of Grammercy had even dreamed that on the morrow he would be paying out filthy lucre in the Gotham Bank, her daughter would not have been profaned with an introduction. But in this case ignorance was bliss. The Castleton girls fairly beamed on Stephen. So did Julia Grammercy. When Mrs Strathford was asked about him, she smiled pleasantly, and said: "A friend of Mr. Strathford's. Engaged, I understand, in some financial operations with him."

As a reply this was a work of art. Geneva was pleased to be introduced formally to Stephen, as it seemed to establish a more perfect equality than had previously existed. As he was privileged to take her in to dinner, they had opportunity of little snatches of conversation, which was availed of gladly.

"I have been to Ridgeburg since I last saw you," she said, soon after they were seated at dinner.

"So I have heard. My mother has written of your visit to Castle Derwent. Our baronial halls are an interesting study."

Geneva looked at him keenly, wondering why he had thus spoken of the Ridgeburg farmhouse; but there was nothing of sarcasm to be seen.

Then she remembered Mr. Derwent, and could hear the father repeat himself in the son.

"I spent an evening with your people, and a delightful evening it was to me."

"You are very kind to say It gave great pleasure to them."

"I went over from the station with Tom Lang."

This was accompanied with the demurest little smile.

"In the stage?" Stephen asked, gravely.

Then their eyes met, when her smile became more definite and his gravity lost something of its weight.

"I became an ardent admirer of your music-teacher, Mr. Droner," she said, after a pause made necessary by certain dinner essentials.

"Then you didn't hear him sing."

"No; my acquaintance was limited to an occasional meeting in the store of our genial friend, Mr. Tibbetts."

"Who, my sister writes, mourns your untimely departure."

Then another pause, after which Stephen asked:

"Pardon me, but were the Warristons whom you met in Ridgeburg the people we were speaking of the evening I had the pleasure of calling upon you with Mr. Tremaine?"

"Yes."

Something in her tone caused him to refrain from asking further concerning the Warristons. Glancing across the table, he saw Mr. Bodell

eagerly attentive, as if anxious to catch Miss Aylesbury's reply. Then it occurred to Stephen that, in speaking of the Warristons, Mr. Bodell had heard his question.

"I understand you have been out of town," Mr. Bodell said, looking at Miss Aylesbury.

"In this instance your understanding is correct," she answered, indifferently.

"My claims to infallibility have never been positively asserted," he replied, with just smile enough to show the front of his gleaming teeth.

"I was brought up to believe that some men were born infallible," she returned, with intent to lead him from any mention of the Warristons, or further reference to her Ridgeburg trip.

"That they might be the equal of some women," Bodell answered, his smile distinctly wolfish, for he saw Miss Aylesbury's purpose.

"Modesty, of course, precludes any reply," she said, a gleam of triumph in her frank, fearless eyes.

"Who knows anything of a Mr. Tremaine?" Miss Castleton asked, so putting her question that it became common property.

Miss Castleton would probably have been of serious mind had not her surroundings weakened her. But oak-trees rarely develop in Dresden jardinières.

"I do," Miss Aylesbury responded, without a moment's hesitation. "I attend the church, and have the pleasure of his personal acquaintance."

A close observer would have seen a fine sneer on Mr. Bodell's face, while any one who cared to

look would have seen a heavy scowl on the face of Mr. Aylesbury. There was nothing delicate in Mr. Aylesbury's mental movements. His emotions poured themselves into coarse, common molds, iron-foundry fashion. This, he thought, betokened great strength of character. He was not aware that cast-iron is a brittle affair, less tensile often than glass.

"There was a mission of some kind opened in Castleton a few weeks since, and I went down one evening," Miss Castleton continued, speaking in a clear, pleasant voice. "The church was crowded with all sorts of people. Mr. Tremaine preached, and it was simply wonderful. It seems he had been preaching a series of sermons on Adam and Eve. That evening his topic was the Angel at the Gate. But you have doubtless heard these sermons, Miss Aylesbury?"

"I regret to say I have not," Miss Aylesbury replied.

"Have you, Mr. Bodell," Miss Castleton asked.

"I am glad to say I have not," he answered, with unnecessary warmth.

We are told that great men are not always wise, which, perhaps, is only another way of saying cunning men are often stupid. Mr. Bodell's reply was a blunder, and there are times when a blunder is worse than a crime. His hatred of Tremaine had led him beyond the limits of propriety, and this he saw. So he hastened to add:

"In matters theological I am a sorry blunderer, Miss Castleton. But that Adam-and-Eve story

was so dinned into me in my early life that I have carefully avoided it ever since."

"Then you have not heard Mr. Tremaine?"

"No."

"Or seen him?"

"Never."

At that moment Stephen had difficulty with himself. He thought of the meeting in the bank, of which he had been a witness. But Miss Aylesbury, divining something of his thoughts, asked him a question which required immediate reply. Still he looked at Bodell, a foolish thing to do, for his eyes showed both contempt and indignation. Then, for the first time, Bodell recognized him.

The conversation soon drifted into other channels, and in a few minutes the Tremaine episode was seemingly forgotten. But only seemingly. Aware of his relations with both Wamphrey and Strathford, Bodell determined on being revenged for that contemptuous glance. Moreover, he felt certain that, behind those blazing eyes, Derwent had a knowledge of some things which might be dangerous.

Later in the evening he said:

"I have met you before, Mr. Derwent."

"Yes, at the Gotham Bank. I am a teller there."

"Great pleasure indeed to meet you here. Have you been in the Gotham long?"

In point of phrase Mr. Bodell's remark and question were harmless; in tone and bearing they

were insulting. Stephen felt just what Bodell intended him to feel, but he gave no sign, saying, gently:

"I have been in the Gotham for seven years; in fact, ever since I came from Ridgeburg, a place with which you are familiar, Mr. Bodell."

Bodell's eyes flashed with angry fire. The reply was utterly unexpected. He knew nothing whatever of the relations between Stephen and Tremaine.

"Ridgeburg!" Bodell repeated, a mocking smile upon his face. "I have heard of it, now that you recall it. Miss Aylesbury went there, I understand, on an antenuptial visit to your people. I hope she enjoyed her trip."

The merciless eyes of Bodell had read the hearts of Geneva and Stephen, hence the cunning, sneering allusion.

"But she did not have opportunity, I regret to say, of seeing your father, Squire Bodell. You will be glad to know, I am sure, Miss Warriston has seen him several times."

Bodell fairly writhed. Stephen was as cool as if in the bank. Being taller and of larger build than Bodell, he had the advantage of looking down upon him, and his look was one of supreme contempt. For the moment Bodell seemed to have lost control of himself. When he thought of Eleanor Warriston visiting his father at Ridgeburg, of Tremaine having done the same thing, of Derwent evidently familiar with the secret of his life, it maddened him almost to the point of

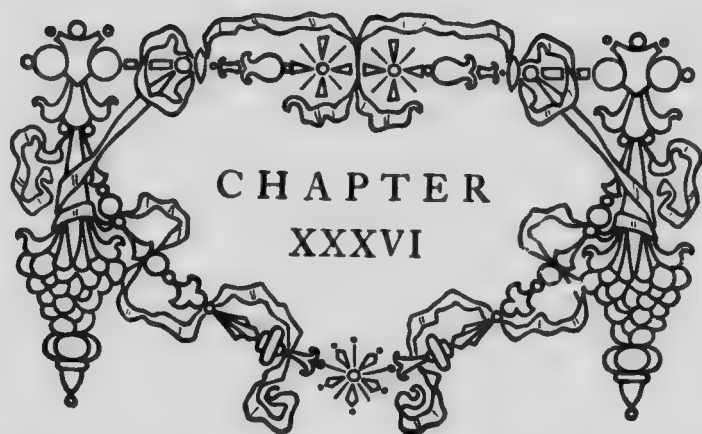
fury. Had he dared, he would have struck Stephen in the face. But he was afraid; for at heart he was a craven.

"Come, gentlemen, Miss Grammercy is going to give us a little music," Mrs. Strathford said, coming up at this moment, giving a smile to Stephen, and, taking Mr. Bodell's arm, led him towards the music-room.

Seeing Miss Aylesbury in the parlor, Stephen lingered, hoping to renew their conversation of Ridgeburg. In this, however, he was disappointed. But before leaving she managed to say to him:

"Mr. Derwent, I beg of you to beware of Mr. Bodell. He is a bad and a dangerous man, and means to do you harm."

In a few minutes she had gone, contriving, though to give him a warning look when leaving with her father.



MR. CARTER was sick. Mr. Carter will be remembered as the gentleman who at certain times referred to himself as an ink-slinger for Stennett & Bodell. Sickness was not an unusual thing with Mr. Carter, at least not in the form with which he was afflicted. Hence Stennett & Bodell were wont to accommodate themselves for a few days at stated intervals, knowing that Mr. Carter would appear when his sickness had run its course. But Mr. Carter, at this particular time, not content with sending the particular notice, wrote a letter which Mr. Dolphin delivered in person. In this letter he said:

"I am leaving for the South. The doctor insists upon my going away. My heart action is feeble, my lungs are weak, and I am all used up. As my absence may embarrass you, knowing that Cutty Hunk matters are urgent, I have taken the liberty of suggesting as my substitute the bearer of this note. I will be frank in saying that my friend 'crooks his finger' at times, and also 'plays

the races' when he can. But he will do what you want, and in your way. His name is Fish."

How it happened that Mr. Robert Craig should be in Mr. Carter's room when this note was being written is a circumstance for which each reader must find his own solutions. And why he particularly desired Mr. Carter to intimate that Mr. Fish "crooked his finger" and "played the races" is another problem left for the reader to solve. But perhaps stranger than all is the fact that, immediately after writing this letter and giving it to Mr. Dolphin, Mr. Carter went out with Mr. Craig, nor did he give the impression of being a sick man.

When J. L. Fish presented himself at the office of Stennett & Modell, in no way did he resemble the Mr. Dolphin with whom we are acquainted. The black frock-coat, the white necktie, the tall, shiny hat, had disappeared. Even the gold-rimmed spectacles were missing, together with that gracious benevolent look so characteristic of him. His suit, though horsey, was shabby, and his general appearance indicated that he did not as a usual thing give his nights to meditation and prayer.

"Been in New York any length of time?" Stennett asked, his sharp eyes taking in the details of Mr. Fish's gear,—the scuffed boots, frayed collar, dented hat, but everything neat and clean, as if the wearer had made a brave attempt to hide his poverty.

"Only a few months," replied Mr. Fish.

"In any office during that time?" Stennett asked, scanning Mr. Fish keenly.

"No, sir. I have tried to get something to do since coming to the city, but have not succeeded."

"What do you think of him?" Stennett asked Bodell, a few minutes later in their private office. "I have found out that he comes from Buffalo, writes a good hand, is familiar with office work, and, with a little coaching, may do."

"Who is he?" Bodell asked, looking up from the desk where he was writing.

"A friend of Carter's—relative, I believe. He came to New York last summer, and has been hunting for work ever since. Drinks, of course. Plays the races, Carter says. But, he writes, we can depend upon him doing what we want, and doing it our way."

"Well, that is all we care about. Better have him come in. Carter knows what we want, and how we want it done."

Mr. Fish was, therefore, engaged to serve in the absence of Mr. Carter, who had gone South to recruit his enfeebled health.

"Better fix up a little," Stennett said, "presume you have run down, being out of work so long."

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Fish, gratefully accepting a slight advance payment.

In less than two hours he returned looking more respectable, having interviewed—at least Stennett imagined—a certain relation to whom so many appeal when in financial stress.

Before many days Mr. Fish had amply justi-

fied Mr. Carter in recommending him as a capable, useful clerk. In a surprisingly short time he got the run of the office business, and proved to be a really valuable man. But if any one had followed Mr. Fish when he left the office, his conduct might have occasioned remark. Instead of going home, he went to a cheap downtown boarding-house, the address of which he had given Mr. Stennett. He occupied a room here on the top floor, where he spent some time making copies of such transactions as had taken place during the day. Later in the evening he went out, but so changed in apparel as to be barely recognizable. In half an hour or so he might be seen going to a private room in an uptown hotel, usually finding Mr. Craig waiting for him.

Mr. Fish was not in the least surprised to discover that the Cutty Hunk Mining Company was simply an immense swindle on the part of the promoters. But the magnitude of the swindle astonished him. The vast tracts of land represented as belonging to the company had never been acquired. With the money advanced by Mr. Wamphrey, Mr. Aylesbury, Mr. Strathford, and several others, a company had been formed which was to purchase these lands, absorb the original Cutty Hunk, and proceed to develop the mines. Through an accomplice in Montana, spurious deeds were forwarded to New York, signatures having been forged, seals attached, and the documents made to appear genuine. Already a large number of shares had been sold, the fact of such

men as Wamphrey and Aylesbury being at the head of the concern making the stock valuable before the company was fairly under way. So far the whole management had been in the hands of Stennett and Bodell; but when these promoters found they could not obtain possession of the original Cutty Hunk, they knew the whole thing must fall through. They resolved, therefore, to make a clean sweep of the business. Hence shares were rushed from the printer, Mr. Aylesbury and Mr. Wamphrey signing them in blank, against the time when the general public would rush in to purchase them. These shares were nominally put in the safe of Stennett & Bodell, but in reality they were privately disposed of, dividing the proceeds between them. With such consummate skill had they carried out their plans, that Mr. Wamphrey, practical financier as he was, never once suspected them. Even Mr. Aylesbury, that shrewd old fox, full of tricks and turns, rarely trusting any one, was so deceived by Bodell that he signed stock enough to absorb his whole fortune.

But Mr. Fish could not tell where Stennett & Bodell put the money which came from these shares. There was no entry in the books. No memoranda could be found. The firm had its account in the Gotham, but the immense sums realized from Cutty Hunk stock disappeared without leaving a trace.

One afternoon Mr. Bodell received a telegram; Mr. Fish found it later in the waste-paper basket, and saw the name Maitland signed to the message.

After answering the telegram, Bodell hastily changed his office coat for a more fashionable garment, then immediately went out. As there was no one in the office with Mr. Fish at the time, he considered it a favorable opportunity to study the interior pockets of that coat which Bodell had carelessly thrown on his desk chair. On investigating the coat he found the letter-book which Bodell had taken out in Mr. Strathford's when he read the cashier a letter from Cutty Hunk. This book Mr. Fish opened, going through every compartment, reading also such letters as it contained. Finally he came upon a little slip of paper at which he glanced with much eagerness, making mental notes as he went along. Confident that when Mr. Bodell realized the absence of the letter-book he would return at once to the office, Mr. Fish rapidly executed his task. Having placed the coat where he found it, he climbed back to his high stool, where, a few minutes later, Bodell found him.

"You didn't see my keys anywhere?" Bodell said, giving him a keen look before entering his private office.

"No, sir," Mr. Fish replied, getting down awkwardly from his high stool to assist Bodell in finding the keys.

"I have them," Bodell called out from the inner office.

Then he went out, saying he would not return that day.

Not having resumed his place at the desk, Mr.

Fish thought he would see if Mr. Bodell had removed his coat from the chair. The coat was there, but the letter-book was gone, whereupon Mr. Fish smiled a broad, opulent smile, after which he whistled variations of an involved and convoluted nature. For a man of his years, there were times when Mr. Fish was positively frivolous.

That same evening Stephen Derwent called upon the Hogans.

"A purely formal call this is," he said pleasantly to Mrs. Hogan. "I have n't been here since the party."

When Ted heard Stephen's voice, he came into the hall, his pale face lighted up, and a smile was upon his tremulous lips.

"Well, Ted, my boy, I suppose you think I am deserting you; but we are busy downstairs these days."

"The boy is askin' for ye, Mистер Derwent," Mr. Hogan had said that afternoon, soon after the bank had closed, and Stephen was arranging his money before putting it in the safe.

"How is Ted?" Stephen asked, snapping a rubber band over some bills.

"He's not well at all. I dunno just what's wrong with him. He's troubled in some way."

"Tell him I may get up this evening," Stephen said, as he finished the clearing up of his desk.

Stephen, of course, had the big chair when he went into the parlor, Ted occupying it with him, and he soon had the blind boy interested in some Ridgeburg happening. Mr. Hogan had been sent

on an errand by Mr. Strathford, and would not return for an hour at least. Mrs. Hogan having some duties which detained her in the kitchen, Stephen and Ted had the parlor to themselves. During a lull in their conversation, Ted nestled his head upon Stephen's arm, and dropped off almost at once into what seemed a deep sleep. Stephen looked tenderly down at the boy's pale, delicate face, so ethereal and spiritual that it seemed as the face of an angel. For a few minutes Ted breathed heavily, then he began to gasp and struggle as if in pain. Stephen's first thought was to lay the boy back in the big chair, while he ran into the kitchen for Mrs. Hogan; but before he could do this Ted had opened his eyes, which seemed full of mysterious light. Then he sat on the edge of the chair, looking and listening most intently. Stephen, remembering how careful the Hogans were not to have the boy disturbed, remained perfectly still, though both anxious and troubled. Finally Ted's eyes moved slowly from the spot where they first rested, turning his head as if following some one. Then he stopped. In another moment his lips moved, but the voice was so low that Stephen could barely catch what he said. Then he spoke more distinctly:

"Mr. Strathford is at the safe. He has opened it. He is taking out packages of money—one—two—three—four—five. Now he is setting the timelock. Now the door is shut."

Once more the eyes traveled slowly to the

point from whence they started, and then Ted drew a long, deep breath of relief.

"I'm afraid I've been asleep, Mr. Derwent," he said, raising himself up and turning his face towards Stephen; "but it was so nice to lay my head on your arm I could n't help it."

"An' sure it's time Dan'l was home," Mrs. Hogan said, coming in with a tray, upon which there were various forms of refreshment. "An' it's himself that always likes a little taste of something when he comes in."

Stephen fully appreciated Mrs. Hogan's hospitality; but he was more grateful still for the interruption of her presence. Ted's singular words impressed him most strangely.

He did n't sleep well that night, and, when he did sleep, dreams troubled him. He had all sorts of queer fancies; but in each one of them he saw Bodell's mocking face.

On going to the bank next morning he found a letter from his father, asking him to return the package of bills, as Mrs. Libby was going to Ohio in a few days. When the safe was opened, he took the package and placed it on his desk, intending to do it up express fashion, and send it off by Mr. Hogan. As there were a large number of such packages on his desk, he put his father's to one side, where it might be undisturbed, though still within arm's reach. That was a crowded, busy morning, and before noon he had paid out large sums of money. Exactly at noon Miss Aylesbury came in with her own check for

a thousand dollars. Stephen had a notion that a goodly portion of this check was intended for the new parish house. They spoke to each other, and Stephen, not wishing to lose one glimpse of her face, reached his hand along the desk, and gave her the package intended for his father.

Geneva took the package, though not without allowing his hand to touch hers, a contact which sent hotter blood into both of their faces, then placed the money in her side-bag, and in a moment was gone. After this, Stephen had a run of large draft which involved fresh supplies from the safe, the one package, his father's, as he thought, remaining unbroken on the check. Seeing he could not get the money off as he had intended, he removed the package from the desk, dropping it into his overcoat pocket, which was hanging on a hook at the back of his compartment. Just then Mr. Bodell appeared at his window.

No word of recognition passed between the two men, Bodell contenting himself with placing the check on the glass plate, and Stephen with paying the money called for in the check.

When Bodell received the money, he went into Mr. Wamphrey's room, remaining there some time.

As the bank was about closing, Stephen received a telephone message from Tremaine asking him to call at the office of the parish architect. Stephen, taking the package from his overcoat, transferred it to the inside pocket of his

coat, meaning to stop at the express office on his way to meet Tremaine. But, being detained at the bank, he hurried to the architect's office, where he remained for some time. Then he dined with Tremaine, parting from him about nine o'clock. As there was no express office on the line of his way home, Stephen concluded on sending the package in the morning as he went to the bank. Carefully buttoning up his coat, thus making assurance doubly sure, he took a street-car, and was soon in his lodging.



MRS. MAITLAND, being naturally a weak, impulsive woman, without any definite purpose in life, could not but be affected by such a wily, unscrupulous adventuress as Mrs. Deveral. Whatever religious inclinations Mrs. Maitland once possessed Mrs. Deveral labored to overcome, one time with sneers and mockings, then again with open, direct defiance. Watching Mrs. Maitland with a vigilance which never relaxed, she was able to divine her moods and influence her feelings in any way she pleased. One day the Prophetess would be singularly gracious, smooth of tongue, oily of speech, full of that flattery which appeals to a vain woman, causing Mrs. Maitland to blush and simper like a boarding-school miss.

Another day she would be subtle, alluring, suggestive, making light of things which women generally hold sacred, so that Mrs. Maitland would look at her with startled eyes. Then there were days when she would exert all the force of her imperious, dominating will, compelling Mrs. Mait-

land to bend before her as corn to the autumn wind.

And yet Mrs. Maitland found little pleasure in her association with the Prophetess. Even at the theater, when the mirth on the stage would be fast and furious, filling the house with shrieks of laughter, Mrs. Maitland would feel a chill at her heart, and have a terrible sense of depression. An after-theater supper, with its inevitable champagne, would relieve this feeling for the time, but her gayety was forced and hollow. She had a dim consciousness that her womanhood was being undermined. Her eyes were growing cloudy. A strain of coarseness was working itself into her life. Her perceptions of duty and obligation were losing edge. Right and wrong were not so sharply defined as formerly. Things at which she would have once stood aghast no longer frightened her. She had a sense of danger, and yet the danger almost fascinated her. For the first time in several years she longed for the protection of her husband; for she was beginning to realize a sense of helplessness, conscious also that, unless rescued in some way, she would be overborne and swept away.

The Prophetess in the most unctuous tones would speak of her as a deserted, neglected wife, and of Mr. Maitland as a cruel, heartless man, unworthy to be the husband of such a noble, gifted woman. Mr. Bodell also sympathized with her, his carefully-modulated voice dropping words that were sweet to her ear, but as poison to her soul.

Every day the cordon seemed to narrow, and the way of escape became more difficult.

Going alone down the avenue one morning, she heard the sound of music, and, on looking to see where it came from, she found herself at the cathedral. Something in the music touched her. It seemed familiar; so she stopped and listened for a moment or two, then went up the cathedral steps, finally going in. Only a few people were present, and no one seemed to notice her as she went forward and sat down. With exquisite sweetness the organ and choir blended in the "Adeste Fideles," the strains seeming to repeat themselves in the echoing arches, and then fall as celestial rain upon her troubled heart. Years before her mother sang this same music to one of the Church hymns, and she could now hear that sweet voice gently murmur:

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"

Then the tears came. At first gently, distilling like dew on summer eve, diffusing itself graciously upon the poor, drooping flowers, which had felt the fierce heat of the burning sun. But soon the fountains of her inner life were opened, and great tears rolled down her cheeks, dropping on the daintily-gloved hands which were clasped on her lap. As through a lattice-work one can see the vines and flowers growing on the other side, so

through the strains of the organ and choir she could hear that voice, now sweeter than ever :

"I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

She remained over an hour in the cathedral. The organ ceased its music. The choir passed out from the gallery. No voice of prayer ascended from the altar. The little company of worshipers silently dispersed. Only a stray figure here and there could be seen, lowly bent as if in rapt devotion. And still Mrs. Maitland lingered. At length words of prayer formed themselves on her quivering lips, and deeper prayers gathered in her heart. With clasped hands she sat silently, waiting in some dim way for the answer to her soul's cry. Never did her danger seem so terribly near, and with what horror it now impressed her! The fascination was broken. The alluring fruit, cunningly pressed against her lips, was now seen to be a revolting thing. The suggestive words of Mrs. Deveral burned as with fire before her eyes. Bodell's honeyed phrases revealed to her frightened soul their terrible meaning. But the answer came at length in a deep new peace, and holy purposes took possession of her soul. She had been weak, vain, frivolous,—that was all; but she had been led to the edge of that pit into which so many have fallen, and from whose slime there is no deliverance, once its pollution has been experienced. Dropping upon her knees, Mrs. Maitland solemnly renewed her vows, then walked

slowly down the cathedral aisle, hearing even in the silence:

“That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”

On returning home she went to her room, leaving word she was not to be disturbed. At lunch-time she came downstairs, meeting Mrs. Deveral, who noticed a new expression on the face of her hostess. Not much was said at the table, each woman seemingly occupied with her own thoughts. After lunch, Mrs. Maitland excused herself from an engagement she had with Mrs. Deveral, saying there were matters that required her personal attention. The Prophetess protested; but Mrs. Maitland put the protest aside in such a way as to admit of no discussion. All this was most distressing to the Prophetess. Neither could she understand it. Only the night before she had boasted to Bodell of her influence over Mrs. Maitland, giving him to understand that she had carried out to the letter her infamous compact with him. But she was careful not to show anything of her resentment, speaking most lovingly to Mrs. Maitland, and regretting her absence during the afternoon.

No sooner had Mrs. Deveral gone than Mrs. Maitland, taking her maid, went to the room so long occupied by the Prophetess.

“Martha,” she said, speaking in a tone not usual with her, “I wish you to pack Mrs. Deveral’s trunk. She leaves us this evening.”

Nothing loath, Martha set about the task, shrewdly suspecting that Mrs. Deveral was not aware of Mrs. Maitland's intentions.

For some weeks the servants had been on the point of revolt, Mrs. Deveral's coarse, vulgar ways, together with her insolent bearing, having aroused their indignation. The cook was particularly wrathful. For a woman with an imaginary body, Mrs. Deveral gave the cook much trouble, demanding substantial food in astonishing quantity. Martha, therefore, packed the trunk with hearty good will.

When this was done, Mrs. Maitland telephoned to a Broadway hotel, engaging a room there, also asking that the trunk be sent for. When the expressman came for the trunk, all of the servants gathered at the basement windows, that they might rejoice at its departure. Then Mrs. Maitland wrote a short note to be given Mrs. Deveral when she returned, also leaving positive orders with the servants that under no circumstances would she see Mrs. Deveral.

Before going back to her room the afternoon mail came in, and among the letters was one from Mr. Maitland. Taking it, she went upstairs, where she remained most of the afternoon.

Mr. Maitland's letter was as follows:

"My dear Wife,—"

"Thank God for that word!" Mrs. Maitland said, fervently, tears of gratitude filling her eyes.

"I want you to come over here by the first steamer. Leave the house just as it is; the

servants can take care of it, as there is a chance of our getting home for Christmas.

"I think we have been drifting apart long enough, perhaps because we have not understood each other. But there is yet time for us to begin all over again. I need n't write any more now, as you know what I mean. Cable me your steamer, and I will meet you at Southampton or Liverpool. Good-bye.

Ever yours,

"E. M."

With the eagerness of a girl Mrs. Maitland consulted the steamer sailings in the newspapers. In an hour a messenger was at the office of the White Star Line engaging her room. Once more Martha was packing her trunk; but this time there was no joy in the service, and before dinner had been announced most of Mrs. Maitland's preparations were made for sailing on the following day.

That evening, when Mr. Bodell called, he could hardly believe his ears when told that Mrs. Deveral had gone to the St. Swithin's Hotel, and Mrs. Maitland expected to sail for Liverpool on the morrow. He asked to see Mrs. Maitland, but the servant said she was busy and desired to be excused.

When Bodell left the house he was purple with rage. His eyes shot fire, and all his passionate, vindictive nature came to the surface. Maddened to a point of fury, he stood for a moment on the sidewalk, staring impotently at the house. Then leaping into the carriage in which he had come,

he told the driver to go with all haste to the St. Swithin's.

"A nice mess you have made of it!" he exclaimed, furiously, the moment he entered Mrs. Deveral's room.

If Mr. Bodell had ever known the first movement of pity, he would not have greeted the Prophetess in this brutal fashion. But she was so stunned that she hardly knew what he said. Only a few hours before she was the honored guest of Mrs. Maitland, with the entire household at her command. That very afternoon she had driven through the park in Mrs. Maitland's carriage. For several weeks Mrs. Maitland's servants had waited on her from morning till night. Just an hour or two before, Mrs. Maitland's purse was open to her slightest wish. Through Mrs. Maitland's influence she was making her way into circles of wealth and favor. And now she is cast out without a moment's warning, her dreams of enrichment utterly broken, nothing left but the old life of imposture and poverty.

"Read that," she said hoarsely, when Bodell had concluded his angry tirade, throwing him Mrs. Maitland's letter.

He read it. Mrs. Maitland had not written at length, but her note was painfully definite.

"MRS. DEVERAL: *My dear Madam*,—I have sent your trunk to the St. Swithin's, where you are my guest for a week.

"Permit me to say that for your teachings and

theories I have an utter abhorrence, and deeply regret that such things have ever had the sanction of my house.

"I am compelled to believe that your purpose in urging your mischievous doctrines upon me is unworthy of any true, honest-hearted woman.

"You need not trouble to call, as I have given the servants instructions not to receive you.

"Yours, etc.,

"MRS. EARNEST MAITLAND."

"What am I to do?" the Prophetess asked, when Bodell had finished reading the letter.

"As you have done all your life," he contemptuously answered, "live by your wits, hunt up another victim, fatten that big carcass as best you can."

"What about my money?" she demanded, fiercely, stung into madness by his coarse, unfeeling words.

"Your money!" he sneered, his face resuming its mocking expression.

"So you have added swindler to your other accomplishments, and have now reached the level of common thief," she hissed at him, fairly beside herself with anger.

At his suggestion she had subscribed for a large number of Cutty Hunk shares, giving him the money, as he represented that only in this way could the stock be secured.

"As you please," he snarled, showing his white teeth. "You did not have to add swindler to your

list, for you have done nothing but swindle ever since you were old enough to know what it was."

Having spoken in this elegant form to a woman whom he had robbed, Mr. Bodell went out, leaving the Prophetess to her rage and poverty.

On the day Mr. Fish examined Bodell's letter-book he went to his lodgings earlier than usual. After reinvesting himself in the character of Mr. Dolphin, he went to Mr. Carlisle's office. When Mr. Dolphin named the amount stated on the memorandum which he had seen in Bodell's letter-book, Carlisle looked at Craig, Craig looked at Carlisle, then both looked at Mr. Dolphin.

"It is a fact, gentlemen," he said, "here is an exact copy," taking out of his pocket a well-worn wallet, from which he produced a card.

On this card were figures written in pencil tallying exactly with those he had first given.

"How long are your respected employers likely to hold out?" Carlisle asked, at the same time writing a telegram.

"About a month longer. There is a lot of money coming in. Shares are going out in stacks, but each buyer is sworn to secrecy. The fool-killer has n't been in these parts for some time."

"Then you think, Mr. Dolphin, we can count on four weeks?"

It was Mr. Craig who spoke.

"They may light out to-morrow for all I can say; but as things now look, I should say not far from that time."

When Mr. Carlisle had written his telegram, he showed it to Mr. Craig, who simply nodded after reading it.

"Have that sent immediately," Mr. Carlisle said to the office-boy who answered his touch of the electric button on his desk. The telegram was to Hank Dobbins.

"Come on at once with Zona and her mother. Bring Warriston. Wire when you start.

"E. C."

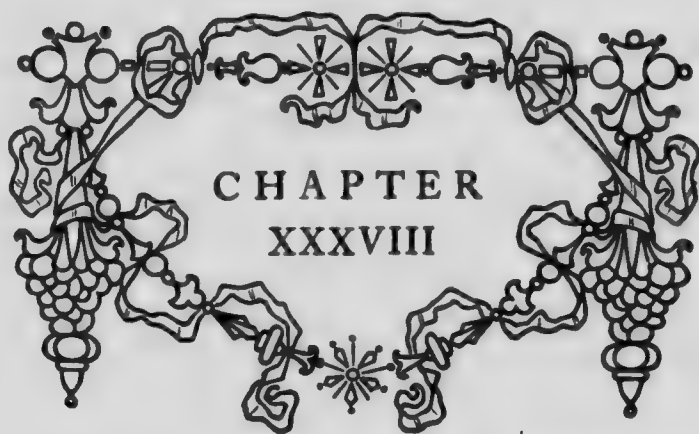
"Things are getting pretty warm," Craig said, when Dolphin had gone.

"And they are likely to be warmer," Carlisle replied.

"Stennett & Bodell are a precious pair," Craig then remarked.

"And so are Craig & Carlisle," Mr. Carlisle responded.

"Especially the Dolphin," Craig said, his little eyes twinkling merrily.



"YOUR friend, Mr. Tremaine, has a pleasant job on his hands," Mr. Aylesbury remarked grimly to Geneva, as they were at dinner the next day after her visit to the Gotham bank, when Stephen cashed her thousand-dollar check.

"You refer to his plans for the new parish house?" she questioned, surprised that her father should speak of this, as it had caused unpleasant discussion more than once.

"No, I do n't," he returned, snappishly; "I refer to his getting bail for Derwent, one of our tellers, who is under arrest for stealing money from the bank."

"What! Mr. Derwent!" Geneva exclaimed, indignantly. "There must be some mistake. He could n't do such a thing."

"O yes!—everything is a mistake. Of course he could n't. Still, when he was arrested a package of our bills was found on him," Mr. Aylesbury sneeringly answered, enjoying the distress so evident on Geneva's face.

"Why, papa!" she said more dismayed than before, "you don't mean that Mr. Derwent is actually charged with stealing money from the bank. I tell you it is impossible!"

"That is just what I mean; and, what is more, there is n't any doubt about it, either. Five packages of a thousand dollars each have been taken from the safe. Yesterday he was seen putting one of these packages in his pocket. Last night when he was searched this package was found on him. Do you want it made plainer?"

"You may believe Mr. Derwent guilty, but I do n't. He is incapable of it. And you will find this out before long."

"Your high heroics, Geneva, do n't count in this case, and you are only wasting them on me. One would think, to look at you, that it was some concern of yours."

"It is my concern," she hotly replied, a wave of indignation sweeping over her face. "To have a friend of Mr. Tremaine's arrested and taken to the police station as if he were a common criminal, is an outrage."

"Then he should n't have stolen the money."

"He did not steal the money."

"Mr. Bodell saw him put the package of bills in his pocket."

"I do n't care what Mr. Bodell saw; Mr. Derwent is innocent."

"Well, he will have to prove it, and I would n't give much for his chance."

"Where is Mr. Derwent now?"

"At the police station. Mr. Tremaine is trying to get bail for him; but he won't find that as easy a job as building parish houses."

"Did he ask you to help him?"

"He did."

"And you refused?"

"Certainly. It would be only throwing good money after bad. If he gets out, he will go off just as young Warriston did."

By this time Mr. Aylesbury had left the dining-room, and was on his way to the hall, and in another moment Geneva heard the door shut after him.

It was yet early, for the Aylesburys were not fashionable in their dining hour. To the average young woman such tidings as those just told by her father would have been overwhelming. But Geneva was not an average young woman. She was strong, resolute, and full of resource.

Instead, therefore, of sitting down to weep, she went to the telephone, calling up Mr. Carlisle, the lawyer chosen by the trustees under her mother's will. In less than an hour, accompanied by Mr. Craig, Carlisle was at the Aylesbury home.

"Who saw him put the package of bills in his pocket?" Carlisle asked, at a certain stage in Geneva's narration.

"Mr. Bodell; but perhaps you are not acquainted with him."

"I am acquainted with Mr. Bodell," Carlisle said, speaking slowly, and at the same time trying to catch Mr. Craig's eye.

"Who reported the matter to Mr. Wamphrey?" Mr. Craig asked.

"Mr. Bodell. At least I infer so from what my father said."

"In that case we will go to the police station, and if Mr. Derwent is still there, we will arrange for the necessary bail."

As Mr. Carlisle said this he looked at Mr. Craig, whose eyes twinkled an immediate reply.

"May I go with you?" Geneva asked. "Only a few weeks since I met Mr. Derwent's people at Ridgeburg—such nice people, too! And they have been exceedingly kind to Mr. Warriston and Eleanor."

When Geneva mentioned the Warristons, Carlisle gave her an eager look, Mr. Craig doing the same. She did not know that Eleanor Warriston was the key to Carlisle's inner life.

"I am afraid you will be distressed if you go to the police station," Carlisle said. "We could bring Mr. Derwent here if you wish to see him to-night."

"Please let me go," she urged. "I won't detain you two minutes," and before he could make reply, she had gone out of the room.

"Bodell again," said Carlisle.

"Wherever there is any devilment you can look for him," Craig answered.

By this time Geneva had returned, and was standing at the door ready to go with them.

The circumstances of Stephen's arrest were substantially as described by Mr. Aylesbury.

It seems that when Bodell went into Mr. Wamphrey's room, after seeing Stephen put the package in his overcoat pocket, he said:

"You had better look out for Derwent. I have just seen him drop a package of bills into his pocket."

"You are surely joking, Mr. Bodell," Mr. Wamphrey said, lifting up a surprised face from the desk at which he was sitting.

"An expensive joke for you," Bodell answered, going on to describe what he had seen while standing at the teller's window.

"And now, having faithfully discharged my duty, as the parsons say, I leave the matter in your hands. But if you take my advice, you will look after that young gentleman, and I would n't be slow about it, either."

When Bodell went out, Mr. Wamphrey sat for some time thinking over what he had heard. Bodell was so positive, and had described the circumstance so minutely, that it looked suspicious. He decided, therefore, to have Stephen shadowed until the matter could have full investigation. Going to the telephone, he at once put himself in communication with police headquarters.

"I want a detective," he said, "one of your best men. I am here at the bank, and will wait for him."

In less than half an hour a Mr. Wilkins called at the bank, who said he had private business with Mr. Wamphrey.

"I want you to look after one of my tellers,"

Mr. Wamphrey said. "Keep him in sight all day. I will have our own detective meet you if an arrest is necessary."

When Stephen left the bank that afternoon close upon five o'clock, a simple-looking countryman followed him to the architect's office where Tremaine had been waiting some time; then to the restaurant where Tremaine and Stephen dined; then to the street when the friends parted. But the countryman was not in the least obtrusive, Stephen never once dreaming of the shadowing process.

Mr. Wamphrey, intending to resign his presidency of the Gotham at the next directors' meeting, had everything so well in hand that he knew the exact amount of money which should be in the safe. He waited, therefore, for the day's returns, allowing every one, even Mr. Strathford, to leave the bank before making an examination of the cash. Taking the statements, for comparison when he went to the safe, he discovered that five packages of a thousand dollars each were missing. For several days he had spent considerable time signing bills, mostly "tens" and "twenties," just received from the treasury, and these were the bills which had gone.

"Bodell, then, was right," he said, his face hardening into iron. "Derwent has stolen the money, taking a package as opportunity offered."

Calling the bank detective, he sent him to meet Wilkins, and then arrest Stephen.

That night at perhaps ten o'clock, the servant

came up to Stephen's room with the message that two men in the parlor desired to see him. He went down at once, wondering who his callers were. On entering the parlor he was met by a man whose appearance was so farmer-like that Stephen instantly thought of Ridgeburg and imagined some of his country friends had called to see him. The light being dim he could not distinguish the faces of either of his visitors, so he said:

"Excuse me, but I do n't recognize you at this moment. Do you come from Ridgeburg?"

The countryman gave him a grim, hard smile.

"No; we are not from Ridgeburg, Mr. Derwent," he answered. "Can we have a few minutes conversation with you?"

"Certainly. Here or in my own room?"

"Your own room will be better."

Much perplexed, Stephen took the men to his room. The light here being good, he immediately recognized Harris, the Gotham detective.

"Why, Harris!" he exclaimed, "what is wrong?"

"Better ask me, Mr. Derwent," said Wilkins. "Five packages of bills are missing from the Gotham safe. You were seen putting a package of bills in your pocket to-day. What have you to say, or do you care to say anything?"

"Certainly I took a package of bills and put them in my overcoat pocket," Stephen answered, with a frank smile. "But that package I brought with me from Ridgeburg. Mr. Strathford knows

all about it. It is my father's money, and is made up of country bills mostly. I was to buy him a bond, but he changed his mind and bought some little property in Ridgeburg. This morning I had a letter from him saying he wanted the money, and I took it from my desk to send by express."

"Did you send the money?" Wilkins asked.

"No; I have n't had time."

"Have you it here?"

"Yes," at the same moment drawing the package from his coat-pocket.

But the moment Stephen saw the package his face turned deathly pale. He knew a terrible mistake had occurred. Wilkins saw the change on Stephen's face, and gave another grim, hard smile.

"Please open the package," he said, in cold police tones.

"I need n't. This is not my father's package. I must have paid the other out by mistake."

"Mr. Wamphrey says the missing packages are new bills mostly tens and twenties," Harris, the bank detective, said. "Please open the package, Mr. Derwent."

Harris liked Stephen, and believed his story; and he hoped that the package, even though not the one mentioned by Stephen, might fail to meet the description of Mr. Wamphrey. But when the package was opened, it contained only new, crisp notes, conforming in every way to the missing money.

"I shall have to arrest you, Mr. Derwent," Wilkins said, in a matter-of-fact way.

"But I tell you it is all a mistake," Stephen said, earnestly.

"That may be, but I have no option in the matter. You will have to come with us."

"What! at this hour of the night?" Stephen said, the horror of the situation beginning to break upon him.

"Yes, now; the law does not provide for special hours of arrest. When we get our man, we take him."

The police instincts of Wilkins were now thoroughly aroused.

"Let me speak to Mrs. Brown, my landlady, and tell her I am going out for the night."

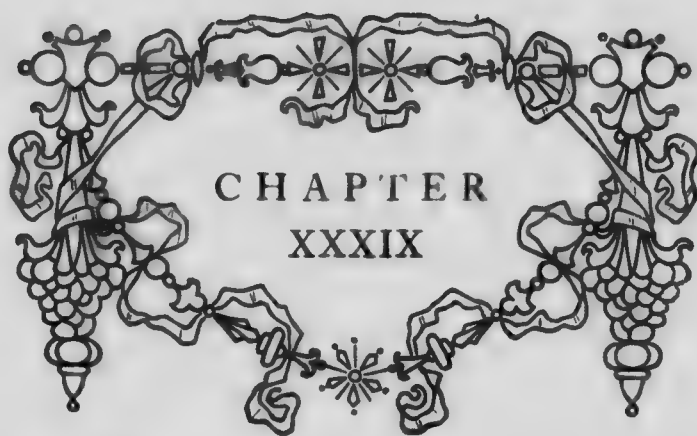
Stephen's face was now almost bloodless, and his lips had a suspicious quiver.

"That's all right," Wilkins dryly remarked, "only I will be with you when you do the speaking."

There was nothing of the rubber-tire or air-cushion in the outfit of Mr. Wilkins. His arrests were made with no more consciousness of nerves or sympathies than an iron lamp-post. They saw Mrs. Brown, after which the three men went out together, Wilkins having a firm hold on Stephen's arm.

That night in her Ridgeburg home, all unconscious of danger, Mrs. Derwent asked God to watch over and bless her absent boy. That night in her own room, Geneva Aylesbury found that Stephen Derwent had become a part of her soul-life, and for the first time breathed his name in

prayer. That night James Bodell boasted at the Old King Cole how he had entrapped one of Tremaine's disciples. That night Mr. Strathford sat with pale, anxious face, looking out upon the angry sky, his soul filled with remorse and shame. That night Stephen Derwent lay on a hard bench in a New York police station, a prisoner charged with a serious crime.



CONSCIOUS in his innocence, and certain that the facts would come out at the examination, Stephen Derwent had no misgivings whatever. It never occurred to him that there was any seriousness in the charge made by Wilkins. He considered it a stupid police blunder, one for which the bank would make prompt reparation.

On entering the court-room next morning he glanced quickly around, expecting to see Mr. Wamphrey and Mr. Strathford, but, to his amazement, there was no representative of the bank except Harris, the detective, and a lawyer. Being wholly unfamiliar with the usage of New York police courts, Stephen hardly knew what was going on until he saw the case was assuming serious form.

Wilkins described his visit to the bank, repeated the instructions given him by Mr. Wamphrey, showing that the prisoner was then under suspicion. Harris testified concerning the warrant of arrest; the package of bills was produced, and

the examination was practically concluded before Stephen realized what it meant.

So far he had kept his temper admirably, but his honest Derwent blood began to bestir itself.

"I told these men last night there was a mistake," he said, speaking with some indignation when the opportunity was given him. "Mr. Wamphrey should not have ordered my arrest without knowing the circumstances of the case. Mr. Strathford knows all about this business. May I ask you to read this letter?"

Here Stephen produced his father's letter, received the day before.

"What has this to do with the case?" the judge asked, looking sharply at Stephen.

"It has everything to do with it,—this letter and another which can be produced in an hour."

The judge read the letter, and after another searching look at Stephen, he said:

"There is more in this case than appears from the evidence just given. Let me hear your version of it."

Stephen then gave him an account of the whole proceedings, beginning with his receiving the money from his father, up to his mistaking the package the day before at the bank. He spoke in a frank, unassuming way, and the judge was decidedly impressed. Still he could not dismiss so serious a charge without thorough investigation. The letter might be a forgery. Perhaps the prisoner had an accomplice.

"Your story and your letter may both be true,"

he said. "I incline to think they are; nevertheless I must hold you for further examination. The captain of the police station connected with this court will give you facilities for communicating with your friends so that you may arrange for bail. The amount of bail will be determined later."

That afternoon Tremaine was startled at receiving a message from Stephen, asking him to come immediately to the Gotham Square Police Station. When he heard Stephen's story he was thoroughly indignant, which increased to red-hot anger when he learned that neither Wamphrey nor Strathford had appeared at the examination. But his anger reached white heat when Mr. Aylesbury refused to become one of Stephen's bondmen. By this time the afternoon was well spent, and unless the necessary bail was secured, Stephen would be held for another night. Tremaine therefore started uptown where his friends resided.

It was almost nine when he came back, accompanied by two gentlemen whose names were familiar to the police captain, and the formalities of bail were only concluded when Miss Aylesbury, with Mr. Carlisle and Mr. Craig, entered the station. Here Geneva did a very daring and utterly unconventional thing, and one which most people will condemn unsparingly: when she saw Stephen she almost ran towards him, and clasping his hand lovingly in hers, she said, "My poor Stephen!" Then lifting up her face to his with a movement inimitably sweet, yet strangely pathetic, she kissed him. Love-making and police stations are not

always associated with each other. The average Romeo and Juliet prefer a balcony, with a proper allowance of moonlight. But in this case there was no balcony at hand, and the moon would be late in rising, so Stephen, with his soul in his eyes and on his face, and with all a lover's rapture, said ecstatically, "My darling Geneva!"

It may have been this performance in the police station which so outraged their sense of propriety that they could no longer sanction such proceedings; but for some reason to Stephen was committed the responsibility of seeing Geneva home, the others parting with them at the carriage door.

Concerning that home-going nothing needs to be said. Words, at best, are but pebbles cast up by the heavings of the soul. And few of them express the emotions out of which they come.

The directors' meeting to which Mr. Aylesbury had gone when he left home, after telling Geneva of Stephen's arrest, proved less unpleasant than was feared. Mr. Wamphrey alluded, of course, to the disappearance of the money, and the fact of Stephen's being held for examination. As the bank was fully protected by Stephen's sureties, the affair was of minor importance. Two of the directors expressed regret at Stephen's manifest betrayal of trust. Thanks to certain insinuations of Bodell, Mr. Wamphrey was able to hint in such a suggestive way regarding Stephen that they began to congratulate themselves on the bank escaping so lightly.

"For some time," Mr. Wamphrey said, "Derwent has been living extravagantly, but covering it up with psalm-singing and all that sort of thing."

"And is n't it singular," one of the directors interposed, "how often that psalm-singing dodge is tried, and how well it works?"

"The closer the imitation, the more dangerous the counterfeit," another director remarked. "The trouble is not with the real psalm-singers, but with those who pretend to be."

After certain routine matters had taken their course, Mr. Wamphrey, in a few well-chosen words, resigned his position as president. As Mr. Wamphrey's speech was type-written—copies of it also being sent to the daily papers—and as all of the directors were informed of his purpose, the element of surprise was not specially prominent in this part of the proceedings.

Then another director produced a series of type-written resolutions—copies of which had also been sent to the newspapers—in which Mr. Wamphrey was commended as an able financier, a judicious counselor, under whose management the bank had attained its enviable position.

After this, various speeches were made, all of them eulogistic of Mr. Wamphrey and of his great service to the Gotham. One director declared enthusiastically that the Gotham was now the Gibraltar in the world of finance. Another spoke of it as the sun in the center of New York's monetary system, while another boldly affirmed that no panic, however serious, could affect its strength

or resources. And all agreed that Mr. Wamphrey was the chief cause of this splendid achievement.

Mr. Strathford was not present at this meeting. The directors, therefore, were free in discussing the matter of a new president.

"Strathford's the man for the place."
"Could n't find a better in New York." "Thoroughly capable in every way." "And he deserves it."

It was thought best to postpone the election for a week, but all understood that no other name but that of Mr. Strathford would be proposed.

Before retiring that night, Mrs. Strathford addressed her husband as "Mr. President," and in her own room planned half a dozen functions.

When Stephen Derwent returned to his lodgings that evening he found Tremaine there. He expected this, Tremaine having said as much when Stephen was leaving the police station with Miss Aylesbury. Naturally their conversation turned upon the missing money, and the steps necessary to establish Stephen's innocence.

"Do you suspect any one?" Tremaine asked.

"I did n't at first, but I do now."

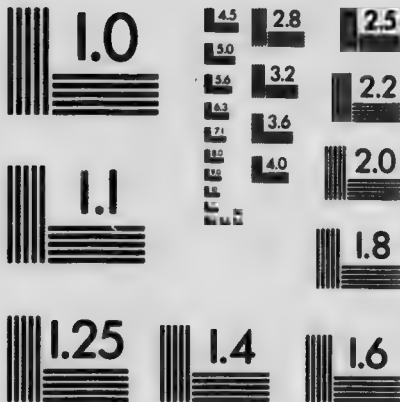
"Give me your reasons. This thing must be probed to the bottom. Some one has taken the money, and your mistaking the package has diverted suspicion from the real thief."

"My reasons may not impress you as they do me. Indeed, I hardly know how to give them shape, they are so vague."



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

"Then all the more reason that we talk them over."

Stephen then spoke of the Hogans, more particularly of the blind boy, and his mysterious gift of mental or spiritual vision. He described the two evenings when Ted declared Mr. Strathford was at the safe, the second time taking out five packages of money.

For some time after Stephen had ended his story, Tremaine sat with his eyes closed, lost, seemingly, in deep thought. Finally he said:

"As generally understood, I am not a Spiritualist. In its common, ordinary form, Spiritualism is either a tawdry fraud or a senseless delusion. Since the days of Mesmer this whole realm has been crowded with impostors and charlatans. Just as material things require material handling, so spiritual things must have spiritual discernment. You can't take ideas out of a book with a pair of tongs, nor catch emotions in a mouse-trap. Eyes of clay and hands of flesh can neither see nor feel that which is spiritual. Hence the 'seance,' with its darkened room and its pretended communication with departed spirits, is such an utter swindle that no person of either common honesty or intelligence can have any part in it. Nevertheless, we are living in a spirit realm. How far that influences us I can not say. That we are influenced at times, and powerfully too, I sincerely believe. In this case, therefore, I see no reason why a keenly sensitive boy, pure, spiritual, with no sordid motive to becloud his mind, should not

have such visions as you describe. Could I see him some time with you?"

"Suppose we go down to the Hogans tomorrow evening. They will be glad to see us."

With this understanding they parted, having previously arranged that Carlisle should conduct Stephen's case when it came up for trial.

While Stephen and Tremaine were discoursing of spirit forces, Miss Aylesbury was in her room thinking over the day's events. And what a day it had been! But a few hours before her father had spoken sneeringly of Stephen Derwent, and yet she had gone to the police station, and in the presence of Stephen's friends openly avowed her love for him. How angry her father would be when he heard of this! But the matter which concerned her was the surest way to establish Stephen's innocence. This led her to examine the package of bills she had received from him the day before. Removing the band, she found the slip which Stephen had inserted, on which was written his father's name, and the purpose for which the money was intended. Examining the bills, she saw they were all of up-country banks, and had no relation whatever with the Gotham. In a moment she saw how the mistake had occurred. Connecting one circumstance with another, the whole matter became clear to her mind. Next morning, soon after breakfast, she was on her way to Carlisle's office; nor did she breathe easily until the package was in his care. On returning home she wrote to Eleanor Warriston,

stating the main facts in the case, suggesting, also, that Mr. Derwent come to New York at once. Geneva's letter found Eleanor in deep distress. Only a few days before, Nat Sykes had come with an urgent message from Squire Bodell.

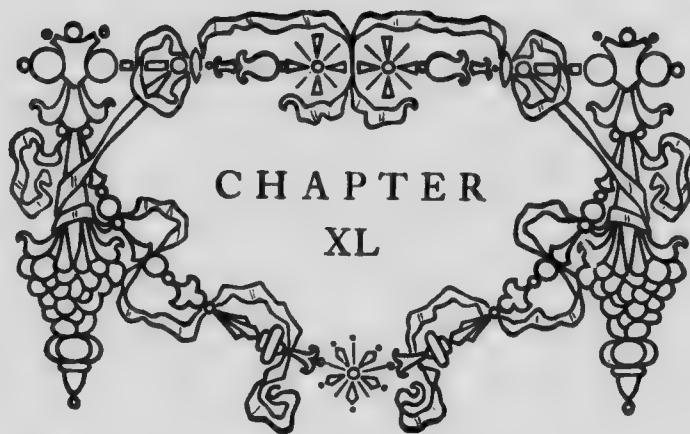
"He's powerful bad," Nat said, his rugged, homely face stricken with grief.

"All last night he kept mutterin' an' talkin' an' callin' for his wife. We tried our best to quiet him, but it war n't any good. He said we was keepin' his wife from him. Then he went back to the time little Jack was drowned, an' it was heartbreakin' how he cried."

Leaving a note for her father, who had gone out for a short drive with Abram Derwent, Eleanor, accompanied by Nat Sykes, started for Squire Bodell's.

A sweet smile lit up the Squire's wasted features when he saw Eleanor enter the room; for the fever had gone, and he was conscious again. Going over to the bed, Eleanor laid her soft, cool hand upon his forehead, then, stooping down, kissed him tenderly.

"I am going—home," he whispered. To this Eleanor had no reply but tears, and another loving kiss upon his pallid cheek. "Yes, I am going home. She has been waiting for me a long time, but she came early this morning with little Jack." The sobs gathered in Eleanor's throat, and she could not speak. "Tell J^r ies," the Squire continued, but in so faint a whisper Eleanor could barely catch his meaning, "that I—I forgive him."



MR. FISH was unsparing in his devotion to the affairs of Stennett & Bodell. Never did a firm enjoy more eager service from a clerk. He was the first one at the office in the morning, and the last one to leave, nor was he ever absent except when out on some errand. Of guileless air, with seemingly just enough intelligence for his present position, the partners often spoke freely in his presence, though using terms and phrases peculiar to themselves. On the morning following the directors' meeting at the Gotham, they had a lively conversation.

"Wam booted the pail last night," Bodell said, looking at Mr. Fish as he spoke; but that industrious individual was busy filling in stock certificates, and evidently did not hear Mr. Bodell's remark.

"Which means that Strathie gets the goods," Stennett replied, following the direction of Bodell's eyes, and observing Mr. Fish.

At that moment Mr. Fish dipped his pen into

the red ink, the proper thing to do; for figures on certificates are more imposing in red ink than when common writing-fluid is used. Stennett & Bodell were very particular in these matters. Certificates coming from their office never lacked the imposing quality.

"Yes, but the goods are covered with a lien. Strathie will have a lively time one of these days."

"Was Musty Ale there, or the Ancient Lager, as you prefer?"

"In force. The dad of Genevieve is great."

Not once did the pen of Mr. Fish stop its monotonous scratching; neither did he manifest the slightest interest in what was being said.

"You remember what Hooker said about the Argentines?" Bodell asked.

"Rather."

"He is going, according to agreement."

"Great country, the Argentines."

"Hooker thinks so."

"When does he sail?"

"Next week."

"I must go and see him off."

"So will I."

Having completed their business in the outer office, the partners retired to a more befitting seclusion, leaving Mr. Fish to continue his work in peace. But from the inner office there came the hum of voices mingled with shouts of laughter. At times a word was dropped which Mr. Fish might have heard, had he cared to listen. And evidently he cared, judging by his attitude at the

desk; for his pen ceased scratching, he sat perfectly still, and his head was so poised as to catch every sound possible.

Then, after a time he wrote a short note, placing it in an envelope, which he addressed:

"C. C.,"

"Important."

Dropping this epistle into his pocket, he resumed work on the certificates. When the partners went to lunch, Mr. Fish left the office for a few minutes, returning with a smile which revealed inward satisfaction. Just what Mr. Fish's note had to do with it may not seem clear, but within an hour Mr. Craig had discovered that a state-room had been engaged on a tramp steamer leaving the following week for South America.

At Mr. Craig's suggestion, Westerhall met the Hank Dobbins contingent at the Jersey City Station, taking them to a quiet hotel uptown.

It was deemed advisable for Hank and his daughter to remain secluded at least for a few days, lest Bodell in some way might learn of their presence in the city. Mr. Craig visited them frequently, coming to the hotel with various legal documents which were signed and attested in due form. In the case of Zona no precautions were necessary, and as Robert Warriston purposely affected the Western costume and bearing there was little chance of discovery.

The tumultuous life of the streets, the crowds

of people, the big stores, the shop-windows, the ceaseless traffic, set Zona fairly wild with delight. The transition from Cutty Hunk to New York fairly overwhelmed her, and her eager, restless tongue plied Robert with unnumbered questions.

These were joyous days for Robert. His father and Eleanor had returned from Ridgeburg, going to their home in Brooklyn, where the Derwents shared their grateful hospitality. What a meeting that was at the Grand Central Station when Stephen and Tremaine stood on the platform waiting for the train! They all crowded into one carriage which followed Miss Aylesbury's natty little coupé she had sent to meet the Warristons.

Considering that Stephen was under bonds to appear in a few days at an adjourned examination, and that his people had come all the way from Ridgeburg to attend the trial, they were rather a merry party. Stephen sat opposite his mother, holding her hand in his most of the way. Tremaine sat opposite Ruth, not holding her hand in his, but much desiring to do so. Abram sat on the back seat between "his women folk," as he called them, looking first out of one window and then another, making such remarks as might be expected from a Ridgeburgian who had never been in New York before.

On arriving at the Warriston home, Mrs. Derwent was gratefully surprised at seeing Miss Aylesbury and being greeted with such warmth that the dear woman almost forgot the long journey.

How Ruth came to make certain discoveries, perhaps Tremaine could tell, as he was present when Miss Aylesbury came to the police station, but when Ruth greeted Geneva she whispered, eagerly:

"O, I am so glad!"

Whether she meant that she was glad to be in Brooklyn, or to see Geneva, or that the journey was over, are matters not yet fully explained. And the reply of Geneva was equally mysterious; for it consisted of a dainty little blush, and a dainty little smile, either one pretty enough in itself, but when united they made her face exceedingly winsome.

Later in the evening, Robert Warriston came over with Mr. Carlisle, Robert having arrived from Montana only a couple of hours before.

"My poor boy," said Mr. Warriston, in tones of rare tenderness, as he took Robert to his arms. Then he kissed him, not only for himself, but for the loving mother who, some years before, in almost her last words, had placed Robert in his care. That kiss reopened the gates of Eden to Robert. Once more he could possess himself of his real manhood. No terrible angel with sword of fire, the symbol of implacable memory and pitiless remorse, barred his passage at the gate which opened into the paradise of honesty and peace.

"Robert!" Eleanor said, impetuously flinging her arms around his neck, her tears shot through with arrows of light, like dewdrops in the morning sun.

So Robert came back, and though the marks of the serpent's fangs would ever remain in his heel, yet with that heel he had crushed the serpent's head.

It now lacked but a few days of the time when the Gotham directors would elect a president. The result was a foregone conclusion. No name but that of Mr. Strathford would be presented. Upon this all were agreed. Several of the dailies, in their financial columns, had referred to the wisdom of the directors in selecting a man of Mr. Strathford's ability. Two or three prominent bank presidents had written to Mr. Strathford, giving him welcome to their fellowship. Mrs. Strathford came in for her share of attentions; for though the difference in income was not considered as of the least moment to her, still, as the wife of a bank president, her rank would be more definite. So the Marchioness of Hoboken gave her a lunch party. Lady Castleton arranged an afternoon tea in her honor. Mrs. Grammercy invited Mr. and Mrs. Strathford to dinner, when a large company, including delegations from the Murray Hill and Tuxedo sets, were presented.

But all this time Mr. Strathford had done nothing in Stephen's case. Not a word had he spoken; not a line had he written. Several times Stephen spoke to Tremaine of this, and wondered if he ought not to write reminding him of the circumstances connected with the package of bills.

"Do n't write him a line," Tremaine said. "A

man who knowingly allows another man to rest under false charges is either acting from some foul motive, or has a heart utterly void of justice. In this case I think it is the motive. I also believe he has fallen into the toils of Bodell."

"How could Bodell affect Mr. Strathford?"

"Just as he does every one who listens to him. Mr. Craig, knowing of my relations to this case, has let me into some of Mr. Strathford's doings. That Mr. Fish, now in the office of Stennett & Bodell, is finding out all sorts of things. His last discovery was a note for eight thousand dollars made by Bodell and indorsed by Strathford. That note matured a few days ago, Strathford paying his half in bills, sending the money by a district messenger. Later Mr. Fish found that this note was made to secure a lot of Cutty Hunk stuff."

"Four thousand dollars in bills, and paid a few days ago!" Stephen said, incredulously.

"I do n't wonder at your surprise; but Mr. Fish has both date and figures."

"Do you remember the date?"

"I think it was the twenty-first."

"Then I was at the Hogans the night before that note was paid."

"The night the boy had the vision you spoke of?"

"Yes."

"When he described Mr. Strathford as taking money out of the safe?"

"Yes."

"I think now you can understand Mr. Strathford's course in your case."

"But with my father here and the original package in Carlisle's possession, the facts are certain to come out."

"True; but he does not know of these things. Besides, time with him is everything. If he can ward off discovery for a few days and is made president of the Gotham, the way out will be simple."

"You think that Bodell suspects Mr. Strathford?"

"I do."

"And that Strathford, to save himself, is using me?"

"That is just what I think."

"Then he is a cold-blooded villain."

"Put it that way, if you please."

"How do you put it?"

"Simply that he has eaten the forbidden apple, and is dead."

"Dead?"

"Yes. The good which was in him is dead. As an upright, honest man, Mr. Strathford has ceased to exist. Men who listen to the serpent become serpents themselves. Hence the world is cursed with men whose original nature is changed into that of the snake. But let Mr. Strathford alone. His punishment, when it comes, will be fearful. Carlisle is about ready to spring his mine."

Tremaine made a mistake in speaking of Mr. Strathford's punishment as something which was

to come. It had come! Sleepless nights, anxious days, torturing hours, ghastly fears, horrors unquenchable, were already his. At times he talked and smiled like other men; but the poison of the serpent was his. Not once did he enter the compartment lately occupied by Stephen. Every shadow that passed his window seemed as the accusing form of the young teller. Every voice that fell upon his ear had in it Bode's mocking tones: "Crisp new bills, Mr. Strathford," accompanied by a laugh which seemed as an echo from hell.

How the unfortunate cashier cursed his wickedness and bemoaned his cowardice! And what vows he made of reparation and atonement! But, unlike Robert Warriston, he could not retrace his steps. The terrible angel, with the still more terrible sword—the sword that flamed and turned every way—flashed its divine fire before his startled eyes, blinding him in its awful radiance.

Tremaine was not able to go with Stephen to the Hogans, and, as Teri was asleep when Stephen called, the interview was limited to Mr. Hogan, who did most of the talking.

"An' it's themselves that will be mightily ashamed one of these days, Misther Derwent. That's all I have to say."

Then he went on to speak of Mr. Strathford:

"Shure an' he's not himself at all. His own mother would n't know him. Since you wint away he's been actin' as if he'd seen a ghost. An' the bank is n't the same. It's a warm welcome you'll git, Misther Derwent, when ye come back."

On the day set for the directors' meeting, almost every newspaper in the city came out that morning with startling head-lines, setting forth the Cutty Hunk swindle, coupling with it several well-known financiers, among others both the president and cashier of the Gotham Bank. Never was a shell aimed with more terrible effect, or exploded with more fearful results. Full particulars of the swindle were given, and the magnitude of the intended robbery was set forth in appalling figures.

Within an hour the Gotham Bank was a scene of wild excitement. Men came rushing in from all parts of the city. Mr. Wamphrey, as president of the Cutty Hunk Company, was openly denounced. Mr. Strathford, it had been stated in the papers, had used the Gotham Bank to assist the Cutty Hunk promoters. This, of course, started a run on the Gotham. The tellers worked as never before, but the lines at each window only grew longer, each depositor drawing out the last penny of his account. To meet this unexpected demand, calls were made on the other banks, some of which responded as freely as they dared. But a run on one bank nearly always means a run on others, and the Gotham had difficulty in obtaining the necessary supplies. Again and again Mr. Strathford sent out for help, using such securities as were available, pledging some for less than half their value. Still the lines only increased in length, and the street became blocked with a surging, shouting mob. Every director of the Gotham Bank had

been summoned, and every resource open to them was utilized. With a face set like iron, Mr. Strathford met the men who forced their way through the Gotham doors, the tellers meanwhile straining every nerve as they cashed the checks so eagerly thrust in at the open window. More securities were sent out, more money was brought in, and the battle raged with undiminished power. At two o'clock a notice was put up on the window, saying the bank would be open for two hours after the usual time. Cheers greeted this announcement, and for the first time since morning the line wavered. Mr. Strathford's iron lips shaped themselves into a smile as he saw the solid lines break, and a glint of triumph shot into his steely eyes. The tellers now began to draw deep breaths.

But just then the afternoon papers made their appearance on the street, scores of boys coming into the crowd, shouting: "Extra! Big Failure on Wall Street!" "Cutty Hunk Swindle!" These papers were eagerly bought, men paying almost any price the boys demanded. The immense type, the striking head-lines, the glaring colors, the sensational rumors to which startling prominence was given, had an immediate effect. The wavering line once more became solid. The struggle for entrance to the bank-doors grew more fierce every moment. Men pushed each other, and even fought for a place in the line. The police were powerless. In vain the crowd was pushed back and attempts at order made, for the crowd had now grown desperate, and would not be restrained.

Inside the bank the strain was even more intense. The tellers, almost fainting with exhaustion, remained at their posts. Eager messengers were sent here and there, coming back with all haste. Mr. Strathford still stood like an iron man near the door, never leaving his post except to go to the safe or vault to procure securities. But the tones of clamoring depositors steadily lengthened, some of the checks being even larger than at any time during the day. A call from the clerk who was serving at Stephen's window compelled Mr. Strathford to enter that compartment. A shudder passed through him as he did so, to be followed by another when the clerk whispered hoarsely:

"My cash is almost gone."

Mr. Strathford knew then he could hold out no longer. Another half hour would have saved him; for then the bank could have closed and, during the night, prepared for the morrow. But it was hopeless now; and the Gotham, which only the week before had been spoken of as the Gibraltar of New York, had to shut its doors.

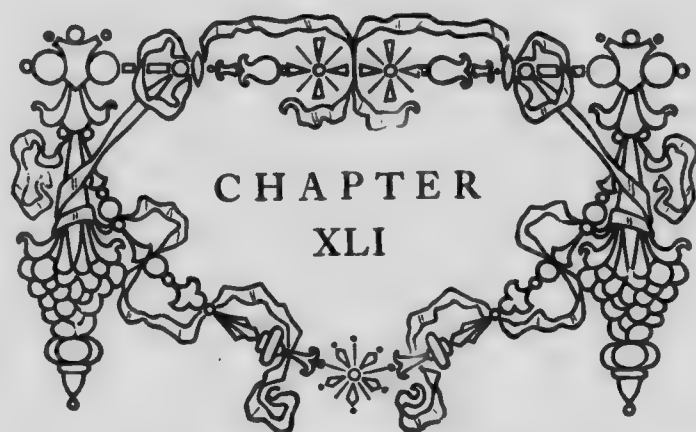
The street was instantly filled with raging demons. Men forgot that they were human. The wild beast that is in every one, waiting for its opportunity, at once leaped from its lair. Cries of derision, of hatred, of despair, of fierce wrath, came from hundreds of throats. The names of Wamphrey, of Strathford, of Aylesbury, were taken up with hissings and hootings and yells. Then darkness set in, but the mob stubbornly refused to leave; nor was anything like peace re-

stored until squads of policemen took possession of the street.

It was almost midnight when Mr. Strathford left the bank, Mr. Hogan letting him out by a side door.

On returning home he went to his desk, where he wrote a note, addressing it to Stephen Derwent.

Some time during the night a shot was heard; and when Mrs. Strathford came rushing terror-stricken into her husband's room, she found him dead, with a revolver in his hand.



THE day after the Gotham failure, Mr. Bodell went to an uptown bank, a quiet, aristocratic institution, which was frequented mostly by ladies and retired gentlemen of independent means. Mr. Bodell was well-known in this bank, making large deposits almost every week; and as there was never any rush of business, he often chatted a moment or two with the clerk who waited on him. For some time his account had been steadily growing, for he used this bank only as a depository, his other business being done through the Gotham. Of late his deposits had been larger, and the amount now to his credit was more than the entire capital of the bank itself.

Stepping from a carriage in which were various articles of baggage, having also two large trunks strapped on behind, he entered the bank, and presented a check which practically covered his entire deposit.

"I do n't want all of it in currency," he said, pleasantly, to the clerk, "though I wish some gold,

as I am going to Mexico, where our eagles are at a premium. If I should call at noon, I wonder if you could have me some Bank of England notes. Get me as many large ones as you can. You have a telephone, and can call up the Chemical. It always has a lot of English money. Of course, any expense you will charge to me."

The clerk was evidently troubled in some way. Usually he was prompt when waiting on Bodell, but he stood as if nervous and embarrassed.

"You understand my wishes, Mr. Brown?" Bodell questioned, impatiently.

"Excuse me, Mr. Bodell," the clerk said, speaking slowly, "but an attachment has been placed on your deposits here. I am enjoined from paying out any of this money."

"An attachment! No one in New York knew of this account here except myself. Who has secured this attachment?"

Bodell was laboring hard to appear calm. As there were no other customers in the bank, he could speak freely with Mr. Brown. There were two men sitting on a bench near the door, who told Mr. Brown when they went in that they had an appointment with one of his customers, and would wait until he came. When Bodell went in they were engaged with the morning papers, which had long accounts of the Gotham failure, and were so interested that they did not even raise their heads from the papers. One of these men was Mr. Dolphin, the other was Hank Dobbins.

"One attachment is in the name of Emma Bo-

dell, who claims to be your wife, and another is in the name of Hank Dobbins, who demands compensation for the support of Zona, Emma Bodell's daughter."

Mr. Brown spoke courteously, but also as one well informed of the reasons for the attachments. And as they had been made some days before, he had taken time to inquire about them.

"Who is back of this outrageous swindle and blackmail?" Bodell asked, his face now livid with passion.

"Mr. Ethan Carlisle has the matter in charge. I am at a loss to know, Mr. Bodell, how the knowledge of your account here got out beyond yourself. But I am powerless, as you know. Could you not stop at Mr. Carlisle's office on your way downtown?"

As Mr. Brown was speaking, Bodell's anger became something fearful. His eyes blazed when Carlisle's name was mentioned. His nostrils quivered with intensity of rage. His breath came and went in gusts of passion. From head to foot he seemed as if in a paroxysm of ungovernable fury. He saw instantly how Carlisle had circumvented him at every point. At Cutty Hunk, Carlisle had defeated his schemes for obtaining possession of the property. Through his interest in the Warristons, Carlisle had obtained control of the original mines. Carlisle undoubtedly had furnished the newspapers with their information, holding it back until, like an avalanche, everything was swept before it. But how did he know of the money in

this bank? Not even Stennett knew of this. And how had he found out that he was married and had a daughter living?

Bodell had always snapped his fingers at lawyers. The law, he said, was made for fools, and only fools employed lawyers. When he was ready, he boasted, he would leave New York, taking a full bag of plunder with him. And now he finds that Carlisle has foiled him, outwitted him, utterly defeated him, so that on the morrow, when he would sail for South America, he will hardly have sufficient funds to pay the balance of his passage money. With a mighty effort he so far controlled himself as to say:

"I will see this blackmailing lawyer, and have the whole crowd of them in State's-prison, where they belong."

Then he walked slowly out of the bank, not even glancing at the men so absorbed in their newspapers. He stood at the door, undecided as to what he had better do. He could not go to the office; it was closed, Stennett having gone to prepare for sailing the next day. Neither could he return to his lodgings, as he had given them up, and his goods were in the trunks now on the hack waiting for him. The King Cole was out of the question; for he had not spared the members of that noble company in selling Cutty Hunk shares. A houseless, homeless man James Bodell was, standing there on the bank steps, poorer even than the hackman who was waiting to drive him to the wharf.

At that moment, when feeling so reckless and desperate, he heard a voice:

"Good morning, Mr. Bodell! How is Cutty Hunk?"

The tone was insulting, and on looking to see who had spoken to him, Bodell recognized Mr. Carter.

In some way Carter had eluded the vigilance of Mr. Craig, and for several days had crooked his finger in great form. His money was gone, his clothes were shabby, his face was unkempt, and altogether he looked thoroughly disreputable. His spree having been unduly prolonged, Mr. Carter had passed through the various stages of such a proceeding, and was now in a condition bordering upon frenzy. The effects of his week's debauch were visible in a fierce yet cunning look upon his face and a wild, almost insane glare in his blood-shot eyes. Sufficiently sober to know what he was saying, but drunk enough to be both taunting and reckless, he sidled up to Bodell, and said:

"Great scheme, that Cutty Hunk! Big money in it. Hope you like Mr. Fish. Rather think, though, he was too smart for you."

Then it dawned upon Bodell that he had been tricked, Carter being a party to it. And Fish was the spy! And this drunken, miserable lout, who stood there grinning like an idiot, holding out his hand so mockingly, was the cause of his ruin!

Bodell looked at Carter in speechless rage. He would have struck him to the ground, had he dared. But such a thing would cause a commotion, and

lead to unpleasant publicity, the thing he was most anxious to avoid. He therefore turned away contemptuously, refusing Carter's outstretched hand. Carter then staggered after him, placing his hand on Bodell's shoulder. This was too much for Bodell. So he shook Carter's hand angrily from his shoulder, at the same moment giving him a fierce push, and was just about stepping into the carriage when Carter, with frenzied cunning, quickly recovered himself and flung his arms around Bodell's neck. Another instant, and they were both under the horses, Bodell fighting for his life, Carter holding him in the grasp of a madman. The horses gave a frightened plunge, one of them striking Bodell a blow so fierce as to batter his face into a shapeless mass of flesh and blood. Then, despite the hackman's grasp of the reins and his strenuous efforts to back them away, the horses bolted, dragging the heavy carriage over Bodell, though he was now unconscious.

Mr. Dolphin and Hank Dobbins were soon on the spot, and succeeded in releasing Bodell from Carter's terrible embrace. Then came the police, who speedily summoned an ambulance, and the two men were taken to the City Hospital, Mr. Dolphin and Hank going with them, as they told the police they were acquainted with the wounded men. After reaching the hospital, Bodell remained unconscious for some time, but when finally something of light and reason returned, he saw Hank Dobbins and Mr. Fish standing beside his cot!

The next time he opened his eyes—which was

not for some hours—neither Hank Dobbins nor Mr. Dolphin was at his bedside. A policeman was there, and Bodell knew he was under arrest.

The next day, Stennett, carefully disguised, went aboard the steamer, which was to sail at noon for South America. He retired at once to his stateroom, remaining there in strict seclusion. His baggage had been sent down the day before, so he carried only a small handbag. On entering the room, he placed this bag under his berth, covering it with a traveling rug. He waited here for Bodell, often looking at his watch and wondering why his partner did not come at the time agreed upon.

At almost the last moment there was a knock on the stateroom door. With a smile he unlocked the door, confident that Bodell was there; but his smile died away when he saw two men in the passage-way, while behind them, near the saloon entrance, was Mr. Fish.

Without waste of either words or time, one of these men—it was Mr. Wilkins—said:

"I have a warrant for your arrest, Mr. Stennett."

Stennett protested vigorously, saying he was not the person referred to, that his name was Hooker, of the firm of Hooker Brothers, merchants in the Argentines, and was now returning home from a business trip to New York. Mr. Wilkins listened with the serenity of an Alaskan totem. Stennett then produced letters and business documents, at which Mr. Wilkins looked with beautiful composure.

"You have a bag in which I am interested, Mr. Stennett, or Hooker, if you prefer it," Wilkins said. This Stennett denied, but Wilkins reached his hand under the berth and brought the bag out.

"You will please open it," he said, in the same tone with which he had arrested Stephen Derwent.

"I won't," Stennett shouted, now white with anger and fear.

"Try this key," said Mr. Fish, reaching one in from the doorway where he kept guard.

Stennett, seeing that denial was useless, suddenly changed his tactics, and made a sudden rush for the door. But Wilkins caught him with a hand of iron, then snapped a handcuff on his wrist, and, before the ship's bell had rung its final warning, Stennett was being marched along the pier, an officer on either side of him, Mr. Fish carrying the bag. In this order they reached the Gotham Square Police Station, where Wilkins had taken Stephen Derwent a short time before.

At Stephen Derwent's postponed examination, the letter of Mr. Strathford and the production of his father's pack~~age~~ ^{age} resulted not only in an honorable discharge, but caused the judge to make some remarks highly complimentary to Stephen, and some just the opposite regarding Mr. Wamphrey and Mr. Strathford.

Neither Mrs. Derwent nor Eleanor Warriston attended court that morning, Mr. Carlisle having assured them that the proceedings would be mere matters of form.

But Geneva Aylesbury was there, not only as a

witness in case of necessity, but to be the first to take Stephen's hand after his discharge, and walk proudly at his side as he left the court. Ruth also was there, and that dainty little maiden never felt prouder of Stephen than she did that morning. The fact of Tremaine's sitting beside her when the judge said such nice things about her brother took nothing from Ruth's joy.

"An' shure an' this is what I said all along," was Mr. Hogan's greeting, who, with Ted, had been in the court-room all the morning.

But Ted only smiled when Stephen put his hand on the little fellow's head. Geneva saw that smile, and, stooping down, gave the blind boy a grateful kiss.

Abram Derwent accepted the proceedings in a quaint, humorous way, scratching his chin and twinkling his eye as he sometimes did when listening to Tom Lang or Mr. Droner at Simon Tibbetts's store. Fred Westerhall was also present, giving up the whole day to the Derwent party. Abram was greatly taken with Fred, as Fred was with him, so they hobnobbed like schoolboys, and had what Abram afterwards declared to be "the greatest kind of a time."

The Derwents remained several days in the city, going on Sunday to Tremaine's church, though Mr. Derwent was a little disappointed at not hearing another "Adam-and-Eve" sermon.

The official examination of the Gotham Bank was more satisfactory than was expected. Its credit was not seriously impaired, and almost every

one spoke kindly of Mr. Strathford, and deplored his rash act on that night of the failure.

But Mrs. Strathford retired permanently from social life. Never again did the Marchioness of Hoboken or Lady Castleton invite her to their homes. Not even a card of condolence was left at her door by scores of those who, but a few days before, had reckoned her as among their dearest friends.

When the bank reopened, which it did in a short time, Stephen was given a regular ovation, and, as a further compensation, was advanced in both rank and salary. Mr. Wamphrey and Mr. Aylesbury having signed certificates in blank at the instigation of Stennett and Bodell, were so seriously involved that they both became bankrupt. From this Mr. Aylesbury never recovered. Thanks to her mother's fortune, Geneva was able to provide for him, but he was so discontented and embittered that life to him was only a burden. Mr. Wamphrey went West, and did not return again to the city.

Maimed and disfigured, Bodell was arraigned with Stennett, and, with the help of Mr. Fish's testimony, supported by the evidence of many victims, notably Mrs. Deveral, who was most bitter in her accusations, the swindling promoters were sent to prison on a fifteen-year sentence.

The last face Bodell saw as he left the courtroom was that of Hank Dobbins.

Hank never said anything to either his daughter or Zona of having met Bodell. But when he

saw Bodell drag himself painfully away, for the heavy carriage-wheels at the time of his encounter with Carter had almost paralyzed both limbs, he could not refrain from muttering under his breath:

"The foul serpent! Now he will have to crawl like a snake as long as he lives."

And now, what of Eleanor Warriston? The opening chapter of our story found her in unutterable dismay as she heard the mocking words of Bodell: "Eleanor Warriston is the apple on your tree. I understand your parable now."

Back of those cruel words a sad story was hidden. How Bodell ever reached into that mystery of sorrow Carlisle never discovered. No one, not even Mr. Craig, had heard a word from Carlisle. But in some way Bodell penetrated the secret; hence his words, like poisoned arrows, entered Carlisle's heart, and carried horror to Eleanor Warriston's soul.

Years before our story opened, by the drowning of both her parents, Lily Scott became an inmate of the Carlisle household. As she was the only child of one of his boyhood friends, the friendship continuing and deepening with the years, and having no near relatives to provide for her, Samuel Carlisle, Ethan's father, assumed her guardianship as a sacred obligation. She was a sensitive, delicate little thing, dreamy and imaginative far beyond her years. Having no desire for the society of other girls, she grew up without such companionships as enter so largely into the life of young people. Of pale face, fragile figure, with soft,

kindly eyes, Lily moved through the Carlisle home as a sweet, gentle spirit, to whom they all became deeply attached.

She was singularly fortunate in her guardian; for, having no daughters of his own, and tenderly cherishing his wife's memory, he gave to Lily the love of a father. He well knew that a girl so frail and sensitive was ill fitted to cope with this coarse, brawling world. A nature so fine as hers, so exquisitely adjusted, and so responsive to every influence, could no more stand the rough, blustering winds of common life than a piece of delicate lace could resist the winter gales of the Atlantic Coast. His hope was that Ethan, during his college vacations, when Lily gave him so much of her companionship, would be attracted to her. And Ethan was, though not in the way his father desired. Ethan's ideal of womanhood was not realized in Lily Scott. He admired her, and had for her a deep affection, but it was not the love a young man gives when he presents his heart as a supreme offering. But when old Mr. Carlisle lay at the point of death and Lily's future so deeply distressed him, Ethan yielded to his father's dying request, and Lily became his wife.

In less than a year her health utterly gave way. Then melancholia set in. At first she was susceptible to home restraints; but in time her condition involved removal to a private asylum, where she could have constant guardianship as well as special treatment. Here she remained for years. But her secret Carlisle guarded with superb chiv-

alry. No word of regret ever passed his lips. At times he would disappear from his office, but only that he might come to this quiet retreat and minister as best he could to the poor, afflicted one.

During these years he became acquainted with the Warristons, first meeting Mr. Warriston in business relations; then later he met Robert, and afterwards Eleanor. But never once, by word or sign, did he fail of loyalty to the stricken girl who bore his name. With magnificent courage he accepted his burden, asking neither favor nor sympathy from any one.

Through a brutal remark of Bodell, which Eleanor chanced to overhear, she learned the secret which Carlisle was hiding so royally in his own breast. Womanlike she deeply pitied Carlisle, and with a pity as pure as an angel's song. How terrible, then, to hear the taunt of Bodell that night on the steamer! And had she known that poor Lily, only a few weeks before, had breathed away her life in Carlisle's arms, her sweet face looking up gratefully into his, Eleanor's indignation against Bodell would have been even more intense.

In the early summer of the following year, Tremaine went to Ridgeburg, and when he returned, Ruth was with him; for in the little meeting-house she had vowed to remain with him "till death us do part," the same vow he had made to her.

About a month later, Stephen Derwent went home to spend his vacation, bringing Geneva with him, but Aylesbury no longer, for one of the first

services Tremaine performed when he came back from his honeymoon was the marriage ceremony of Stephen and Geneva. At that delightful service Zona was maid of honor, and Robert Warriston acted efficiently as best man.

Mr. and Mrs. Hogan had seats among the favored guests, where Ted could hear every word of the service. When the Hank Dobbins party returned to Cutty Hunk, Robert Warriston went with them. Fred Westerhall said Robert Warriston's interests in Cutty Hunk would yet make him a rich man. At this Zona smiled, and said Robert was rich enough now.

Eleanor and Mr. Warriston spent all of that summer in Ridgeburg, not however in the Libby cottage—Stephen and Geneva had that—but in the Bodell homestead, the Squire having willed it to Eleanor. Nat Sykes remained with her, this being a request of Squire Bodell.

Late in the season, Mr. Carlisle came to Ridgeburg as the guest of Abram Derwent and his good wife Sarah. But he did not neglect the Warriston's, going there almost every evening. One night he came away with a glad light on his face, nor was it any wonder, for Eleanor Warriston had promised to become his wife.